

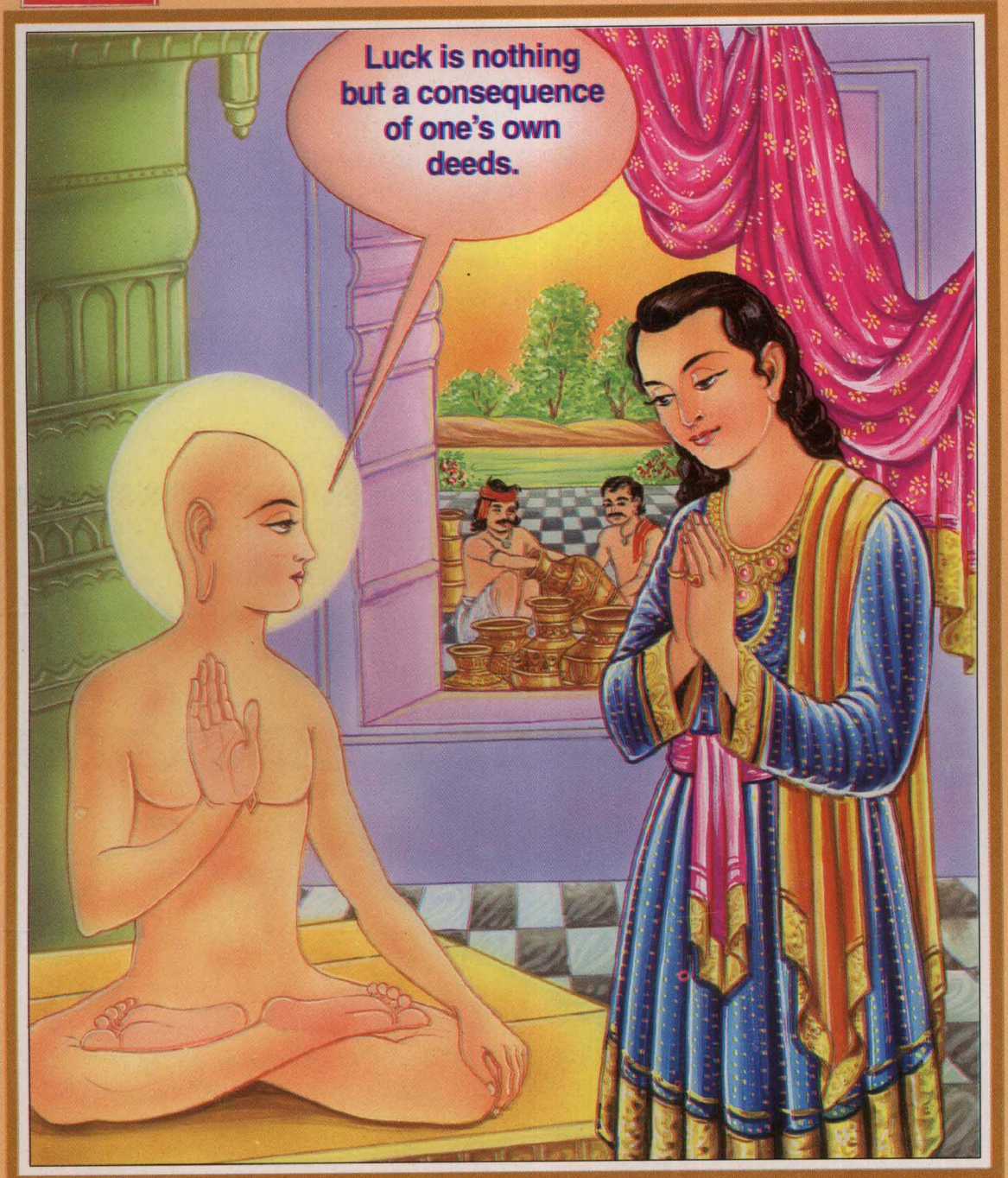


A Mahavir Seva Trust Presentation

Vol. 38

Rs. 25.00

SADDAL PUTRA



SADDAL PUTRA

Saddal Putra was one among the ten famous shravak disciples of Bhagavan Mahavir. He was one of the accomplished and successful artisan traders of his time. An artisan was also called **Gathapati** and **Kumbhakar** in the language of those days. Besides the family business of manufacturing and marketing beautiful and artistic earthen pots, he was also in agriculture and cattle business.

The descriptions in Jain Agams inform that besides his business acumen, he also had profound knowledge of religion and spiritualism. He was an important pillar of the Ajivak sect headed by Acharya Gaushalak. The doctrine of Gaushalak was—"Everything automatically happens according to one's fate. Man is nothing but a puppet of fate." Saddal Putra also believed in this Niyativaad (fatalism). But Bhagavan Mahavir preached the doctrine of endeavour or karma—"Man suffers consequences of his deeds. He writes his own fate."

Bhagavan Mahavir explained this doctrine of endeavour to Saddal Putra with practical logic. Consequently he was disillusioned with fatalism and became a true follower of the doctrine of karma.

His faith in the true principles of Bhagavan Mahavir became so deep rooted that, all the efforts by Gaushalak failed to move him. Gods too took rigorous tests of his religiosity and he passed with flying colours. Till the end of his life he continued to be sincere in his religious pursuits. The source of this picture-story of Saddal Putra is Upasak-dasha Sutra. The second story is about Vijay Kumar and Vijaya. This couple took the vow of celibacy on the first night of their marriage and remained steadfast all their life. Jain poets have composed numerous poetical works on this theme in Sanskrit, Gujarati and Rajasthani.

Editor :

Srichand Surana 'Saras'

Managing Editors :

Dr. Mansukhbhai Jain, Sanjay Surana

Translator :

Surendra Bothara

Illustration :

Shyamal Mitra

PUBLISHERS

MAHAVIR SEVA TRUST

A-7, SAGAR NIWAS, 1ST FLOOR, OFF MANCHHUBHAI ROAD, MALAD (E), MUMBAI-400 097.
PH. (O) 8811397, (R) 8892121

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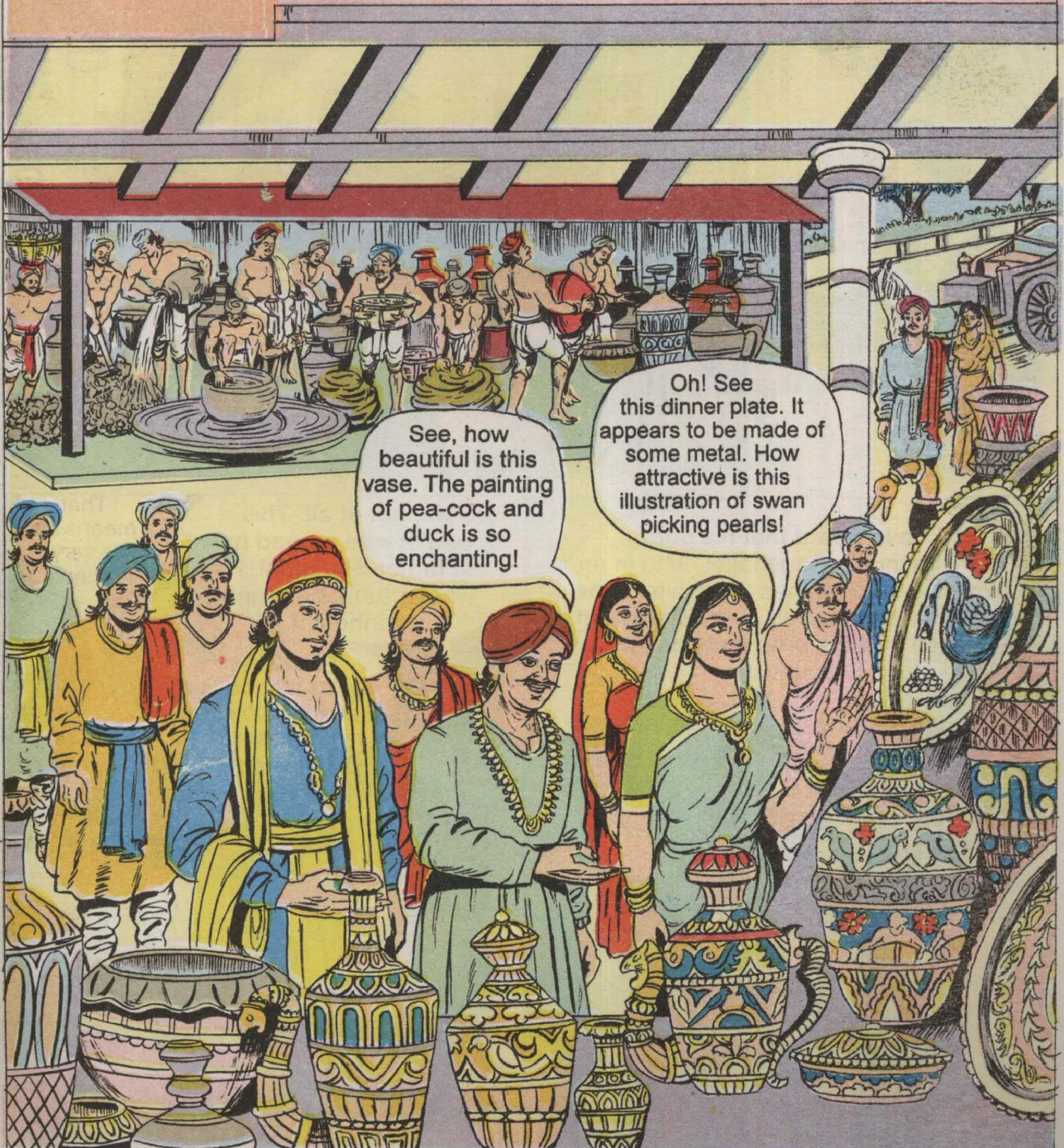
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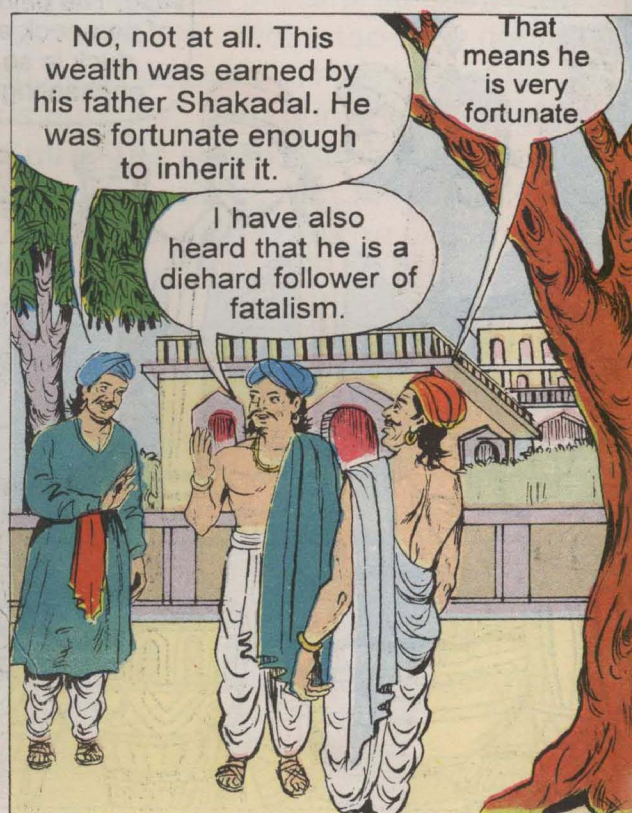
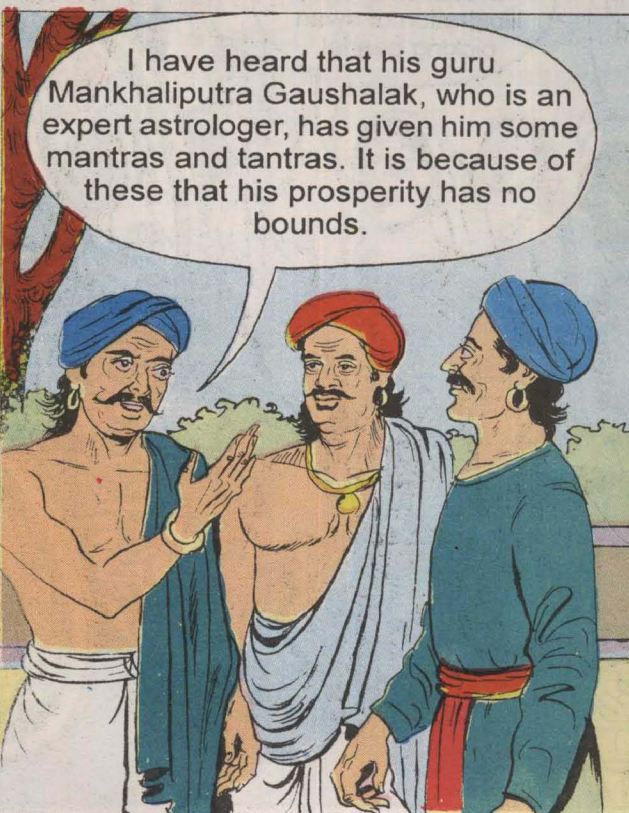
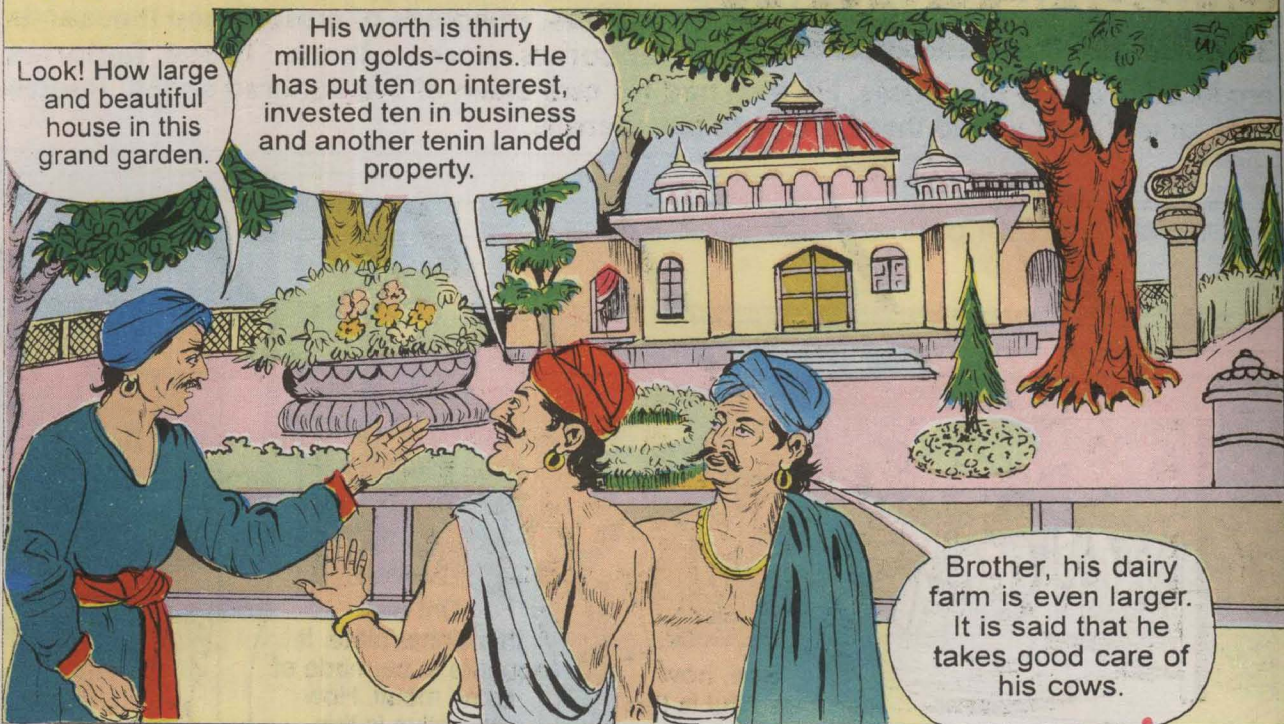
A-7, AWAGARH HOUSE, OPP. ANJNA CINEMA, M.G. ROAD, AGRA-282 002. PH. : 351165

SADDAL PUTRA

In Polaspur city lived a potter named Saddal Putra. He had huge factories for making earthen pots and terra-cottas. Hundreds of artisans and thousands of labourers worked there. These factories produced a variety of utensils. He also had his own chain of five hundred shops. People from far and near visited these shops to buy utensils.



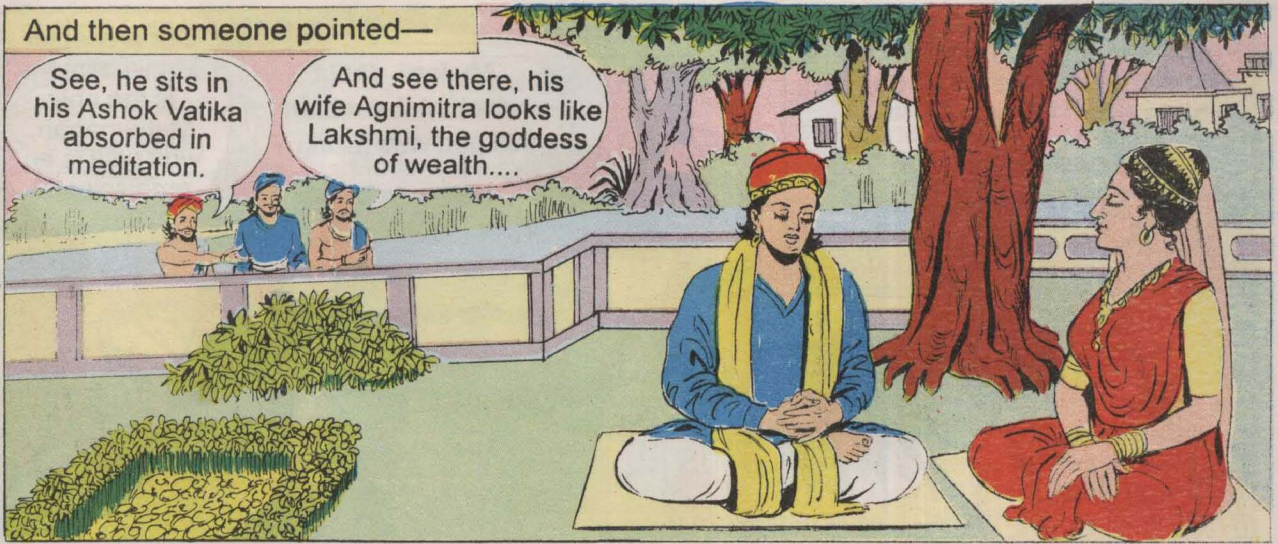
Saddal Putra also had a large dairy having ten thousand cows. Outside the city he had a large garden called Ashok Vatika. Some townsfolk stood outside the garden and talked—



And then someone pointed—

See, he sits in his Ashok Vatika absorbed in meditation.

And see there, his wife Agnimitra looks like Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth....



While the onlookers were talking, a god appeared in the sky with tinkling melodies. Adorned with five coloured dress, a brilliant crown on his head, and a garland of flowers on his neck, the god called—

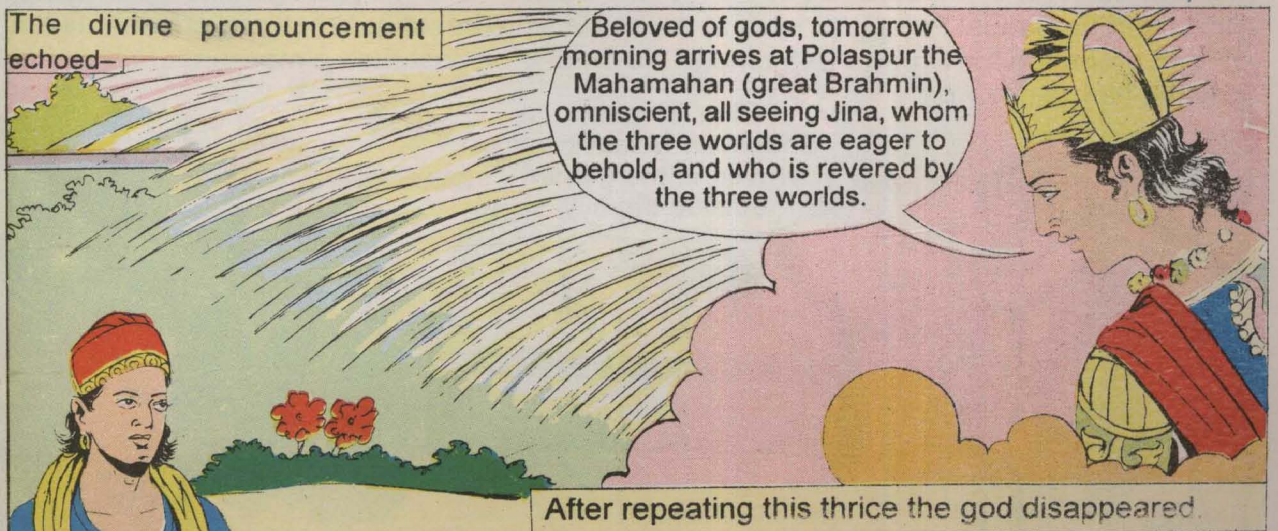
Who calls me ?

Listen, O beloved of gods.



The divine pronouncement echoed—

Beloved of gods, tomorrow morning arrives at Polaspur the Mahamahan (great Brahmin), omniscient, all seeing Jina, whom the three worlds are eager to behold, and who is revered by the three worlds.



After repeating this thrice the god disappeared.

Hearing this prophecy, Saddal Putra sat down brooding on a white marble seat under an Ashoka tree—

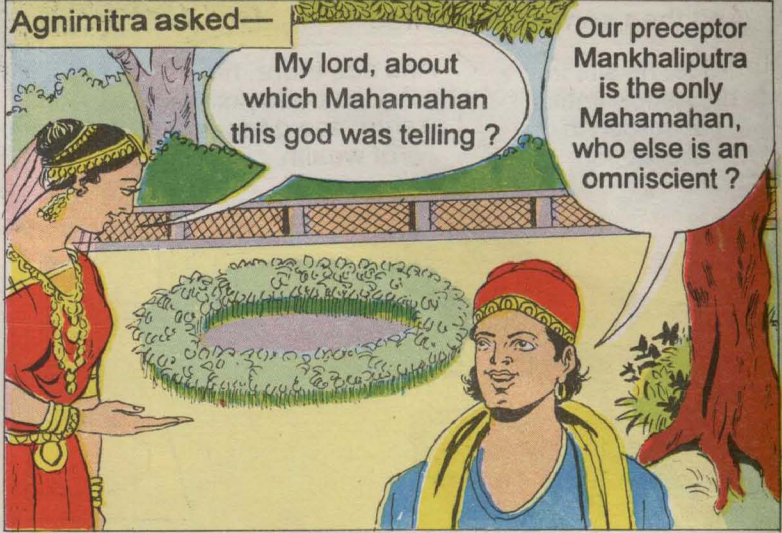
Who can be this god ?



Agnimitra asked—

My lord, about which Mahamahan this god was telling ?

Our preceptor Mankhaliputra is the only Mahamahan, who else is an omniscient ?



Agnimitra was also pleased—

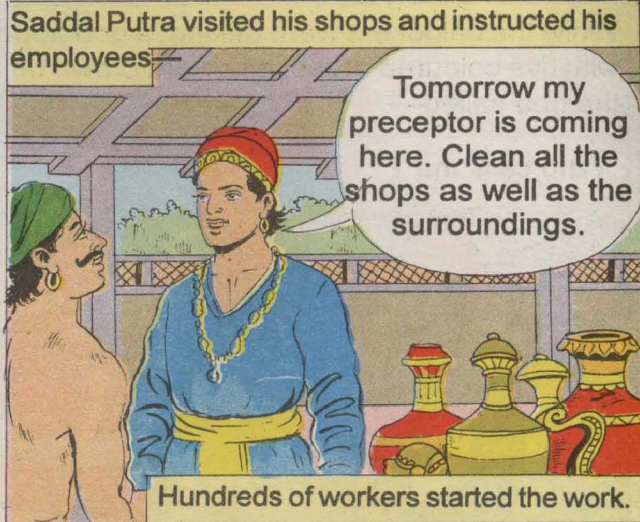
My lord, we should now prepare to welcome him.



With these words Agnimitra went into the house.

Saddal Putra visited his shops and instructed his employees—

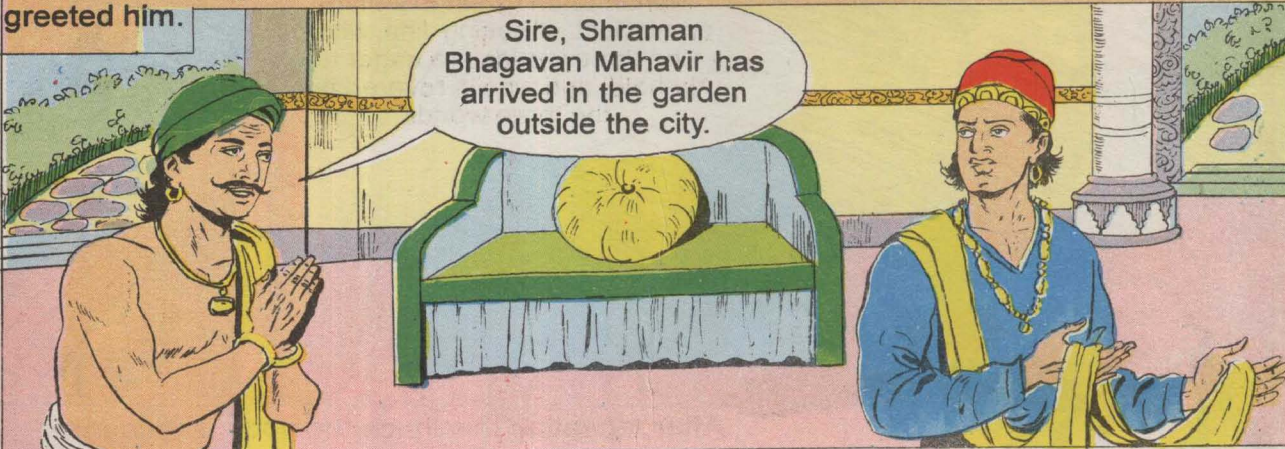
Tomorrow my preceptor is coming here. Clean all the shops as well as the surroundings.



Hundreds of workers started the work.

Next morning Saddal Putra got ready at dawn. He wore beautiful dress and ornaments and started preparing for a grand welcome of his preceptor. Just then a messenger came and greeted him.

Sire, Shraman Bhagavan Mahavir has arrived in the garden outside the city.



Saddal Putra looked at him in surprise.

What ? Shraman Mahavir !

Yes, all-perceiving omniscient Tirthankar Mahavir has arrived. Gods have raised a large Samavasaran*.

Saddal Putra lost all his excitement. He sat on a coach nearby—

Has the prophecy gone wrong ?

Then he thought—

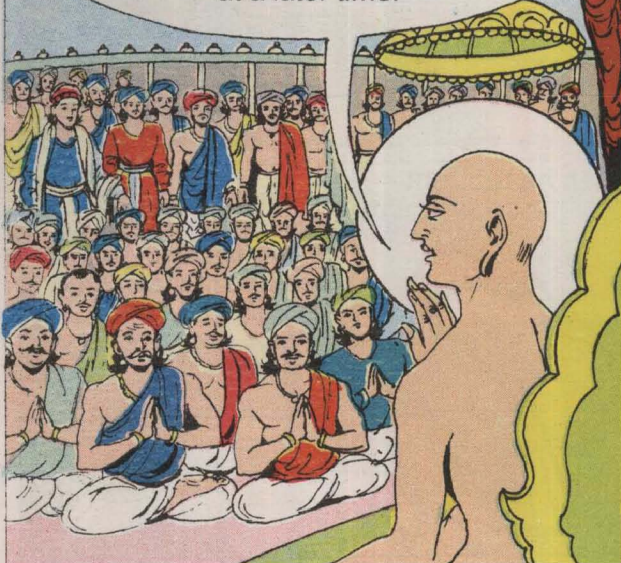
Prophecies can never be false. May be, the god was telling about Shraman Mahavir only. I should visit.

Accompanied by many people, Saddal Putra went to the garden. Reaching there he saw a grand Samavasaran. Thousands of gods, goddesses and men were listening to the sermon of Bhagavan Mahavir. From a distance he beheld the divine appearance of Bhagavan.

Never in my life have I seen such astonishingly radiant person !

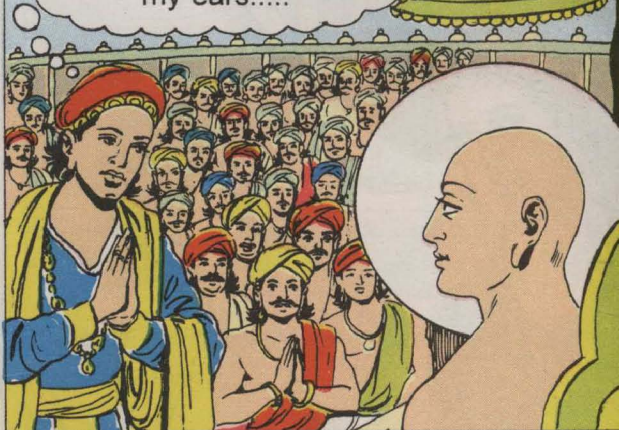
In his discourse Bhagavan was said—

What man calls luck today is the consequence of some deed done in the past. Whatever endeavour or activity a man does, he bears the consequences of that only at a later time.



Saddal Putra kept walking and came nearer. He was thinking—

How serene is his face! His words are hypnotic! It seems as if drops of ambrosia are entering my ears.....

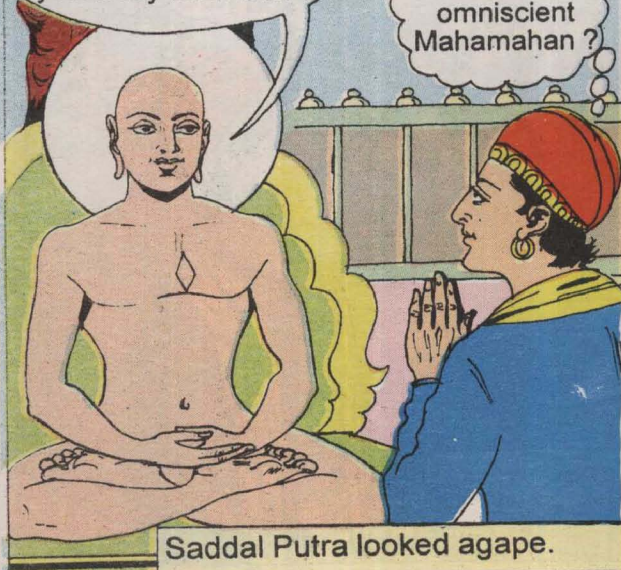


Involuntarily he joined his palms and bowed his head with reverence. He proceeded and took a seat in the religious assembly.

After the discourse everyone left but Saddal Putra sat staring at the serene face of Bhagavan Mahavir who then asked—

Saddal Putra, did you hear some prophecy yesterday afternoon?

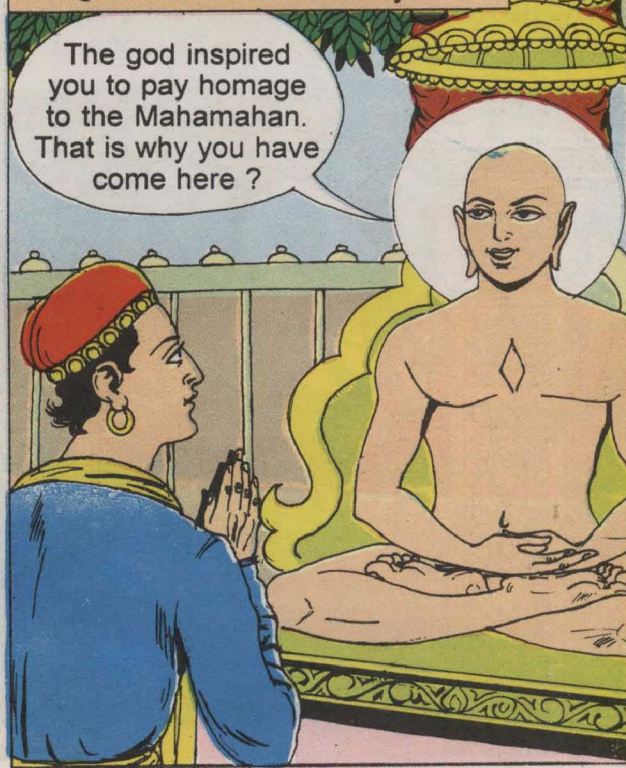
What? How does he know? Is he the omniscient Mahamahan?



Saddal Putra looked agape.

Bhagavan asked innocently—

The god inspired you to pay homage to the Mahamahan. That is why you have come here?



As if drawn by a string, Saddal Putra came near Bhagavan. He thought—

When he knows my mind, he alone should be the omniscient Mahamahan.

He came near Bhagavan and requested—

Bhante, outside Polaspur I have five hundred shops. Please honour me by coming there and accepting bed of hay, seat, etc. #

He humbly paid homage to Bhagavan.

Next day Bhagavan Mahavir came to his large workshop with the group of his disciples. Saddal Putra submitted —

Bhante, this is my workshop. Please honour me by accepting seat and my hospitality.

Bhagavan stayed there with his disciples and Saddal Putra resumed his routine work.

This is the formal way of inviting an ascetic to stay.

Outside the workshop he instructed his workers—

See, these pots have not dried yet. Put them in sun...



He then turned to another yard and said—

Oh! These have dried; shift them in shade.

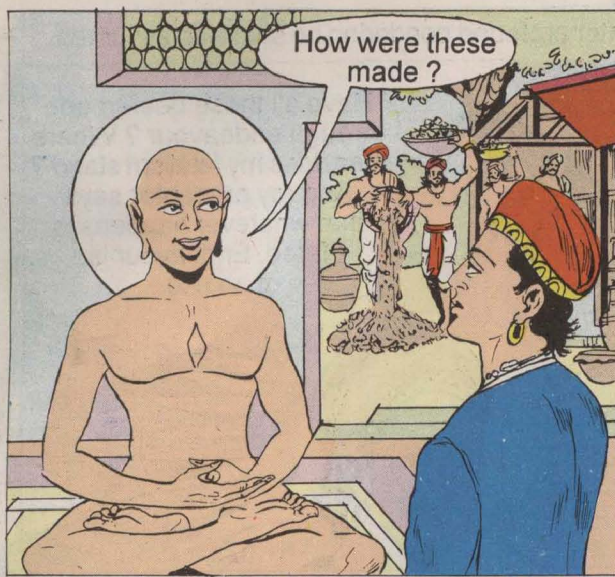


Following the instructions from Saddal Putra the workers started placing utensils of different shapes and sizes in large baskets and shifting them from one place to another. Bhagavan Mahavir was watching all this. He called Saddal Putra who at once came and stood before him with joined palms.

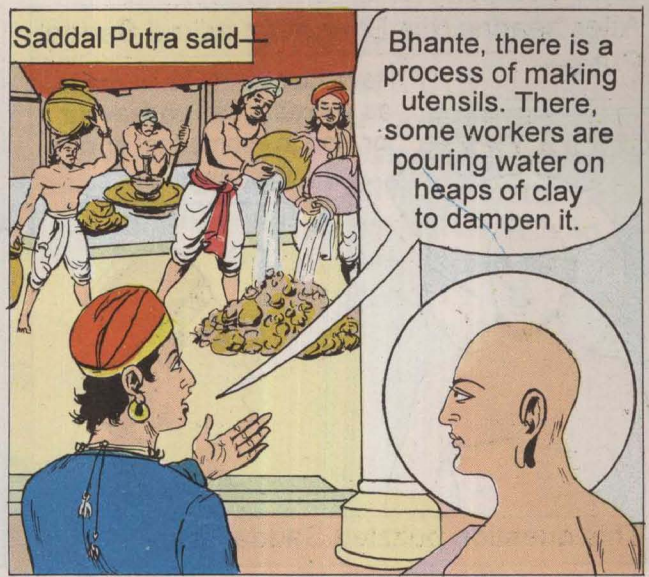
Saddal Putra,
who owns these
utensils? From
where do they
come?

O God, all these
have been made in
my workshop.



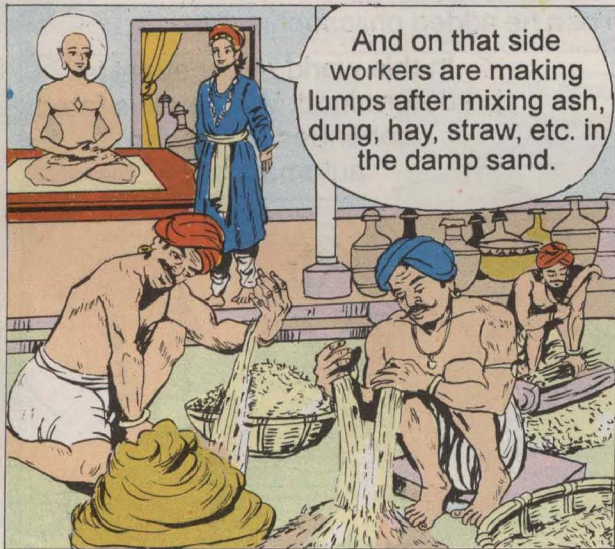


How were these made?

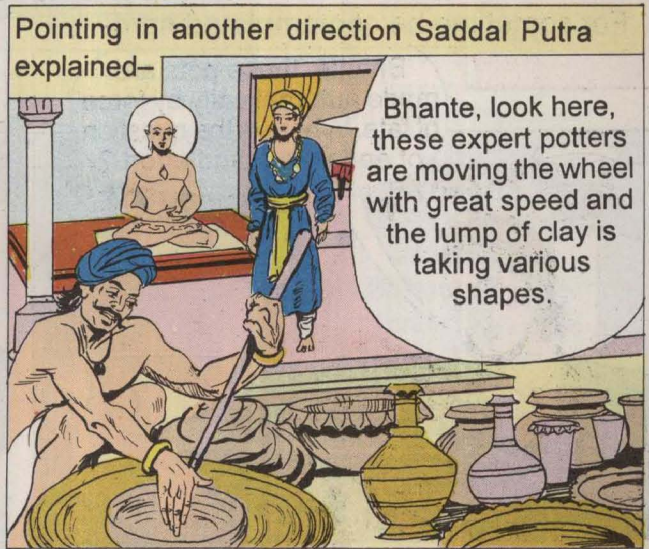


Saddal Putra said—

Bhante, there is a process of making utensils. There, some workers are pouring water on heaps of clay to dampen it.



And on that side workers are making lumps after mixing ash, dung, hay, straw, etc. in the damp sand.



Pointing in another direction Saddal Putra explained—

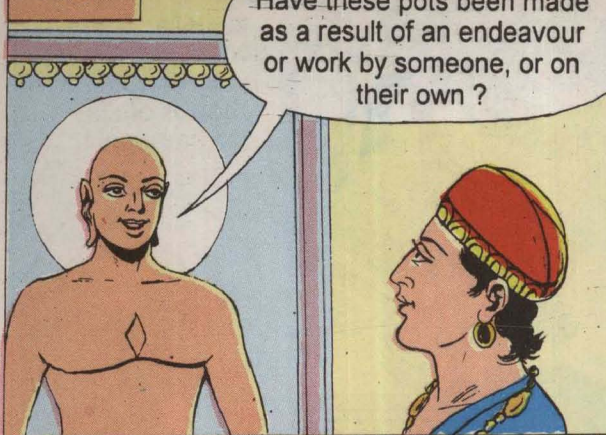
Bhante, look here, these expert potters are moving the wheel with great speed and the lump of clay is taking various shapes.



After pausing a little Saddal Putra continued—

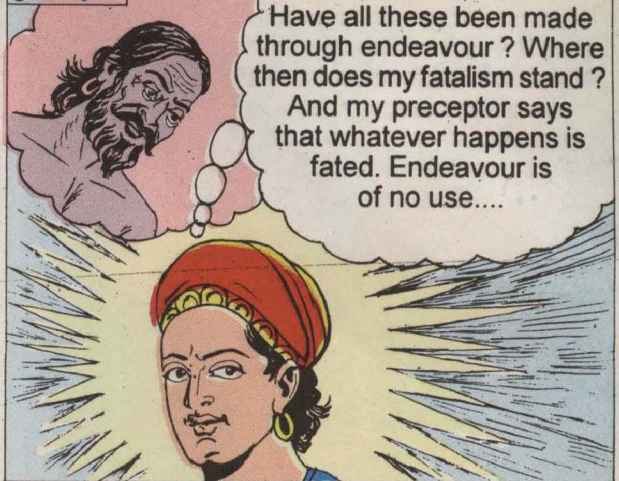
Made with hard labour and skill, these pots are fired in that far away kiln for some days. Then only these get baked hard and can hold water and other things.

After hearing this Bhagavan asked Saddal Putra—

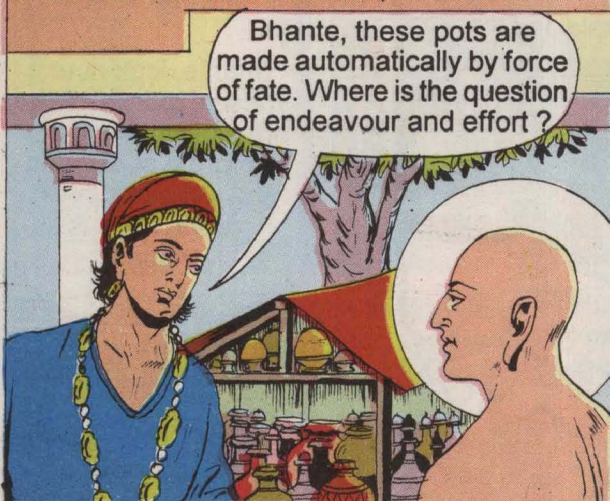


This question puzzled Saddal Putra.

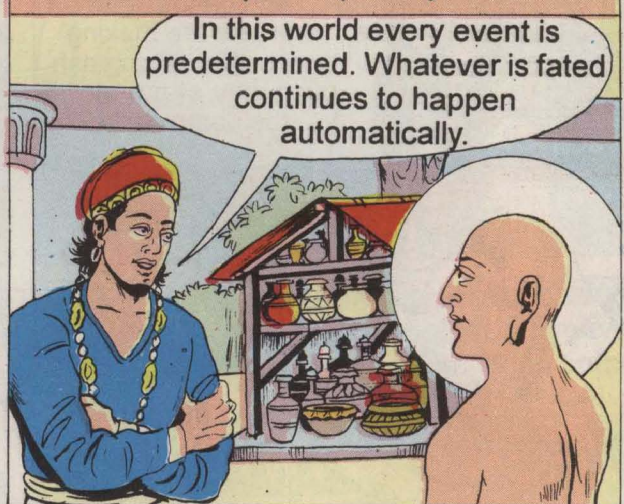
After profound pondering he said with assumed gravity—



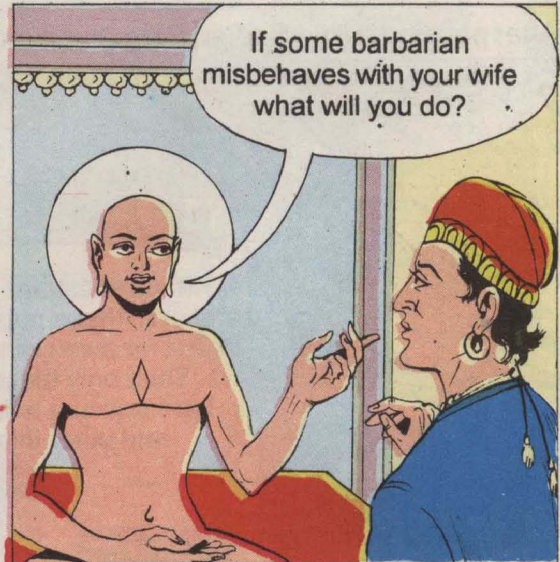
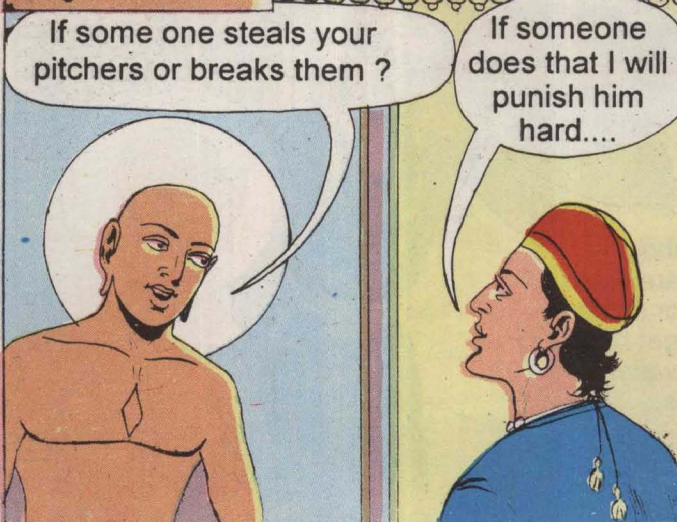
For sometime he contemplated hard—



Then he added philosophically—



Bhagavan Mahavir



With an angry expression Saddal Putra said—

I will punish him harshly and torture him as well.



Mahavir—

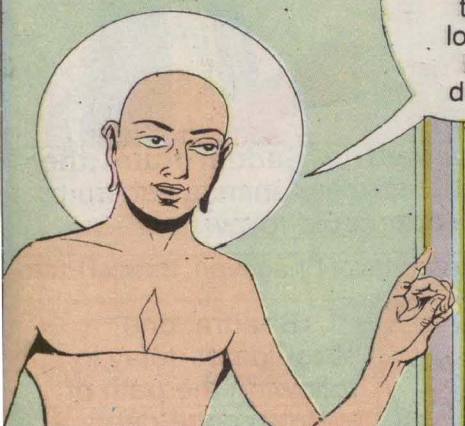
Bhadra, in your opinion no person can either steal your pots or destroy them. All this is a matter of fate, whatever will be, will be. It is no fault of his, then why should you punish him?



Bhagavan Mahavir's logic silenced Saddal Putra.

Bhagavan Mahavir added—

Bhadra, think about this. If fate makes everything happen in this world, effort loses its meaning. Endeavour and diligence become worthless.



Saddal Putra pondered for sometime—



Indeed, the fatalism I follow is not practical. Without effort life cannot move even an inch. Then where is the importance of fate?

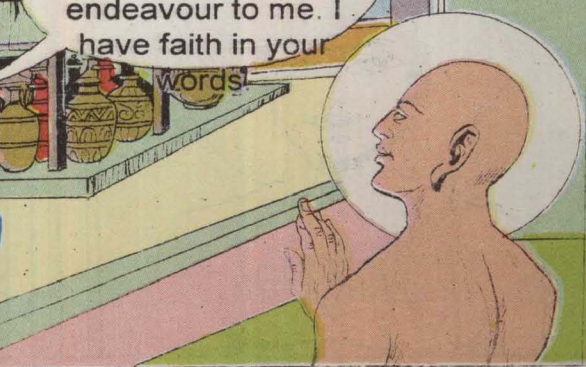
Deep in his thoughts, Saddal Putra stood there.

What Shraman Mahavir says is true. Doing endeavor at every step, why I still talk of fate?



A little later he approached Bhagavan, joined his palms and said—

Bhante, your words have revealed the importance of endeavour to me. I have faith in your words.



Bhagavan Mahavir explained the fundamentals of religion to him in details—

Bhadra, a man bears fruits according to his deeds and endeavour. Even if you call this fruit fate, know that the doer was the man himself. Therefore it is only through endeavour that the soul can get liberated from the bonds of karma.

Bhante, show me the path of this liberation.

Bhagavan Mahavir—

Bhadra, a householder can also follow the religious conduct to the best of his abilities. I call it the religion of minor vows (Anuvrat).

Please explain this Anuvrat to me in details.

Bhagavan explained to Saddal Putra the codes of Anuvrat, including ahimsa and truth, which a householder could follow.

When he heard these words of Bhagavan, Saddal Putra was filled with joy—

Bhante, I have understood what you said and believe it to be true.

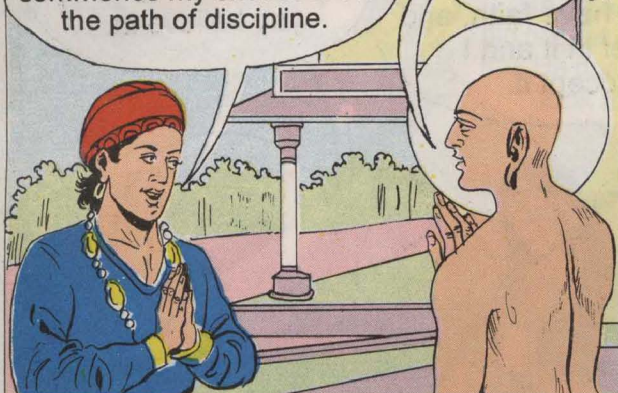
Bhadra, one should not delay in following the path of truth once one understands it.

Do not indulge in unnecessary violence during farming and other such activities. In business, do not resort to lies. Avoid accumulating more than your needs. Discipline the unlimited expanse of desires.....

Saddal Putra—

Yes, Bhante, I agree. I will accept the twelve vows meant for householders and commence my endeavor on the path of discipline.

Bhadra, do at once what pleases you.

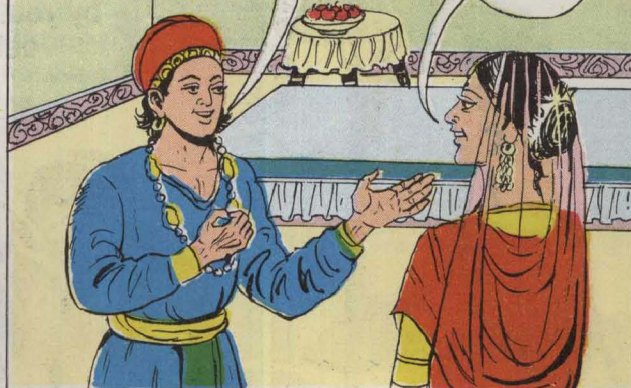


After a pause Saddal Putra got initiated into the Shravak Dharma by Bhagavan.

He then came to his wife Agnimitra—

Dear, today, for the first time in my life I have seen the true light of religion.

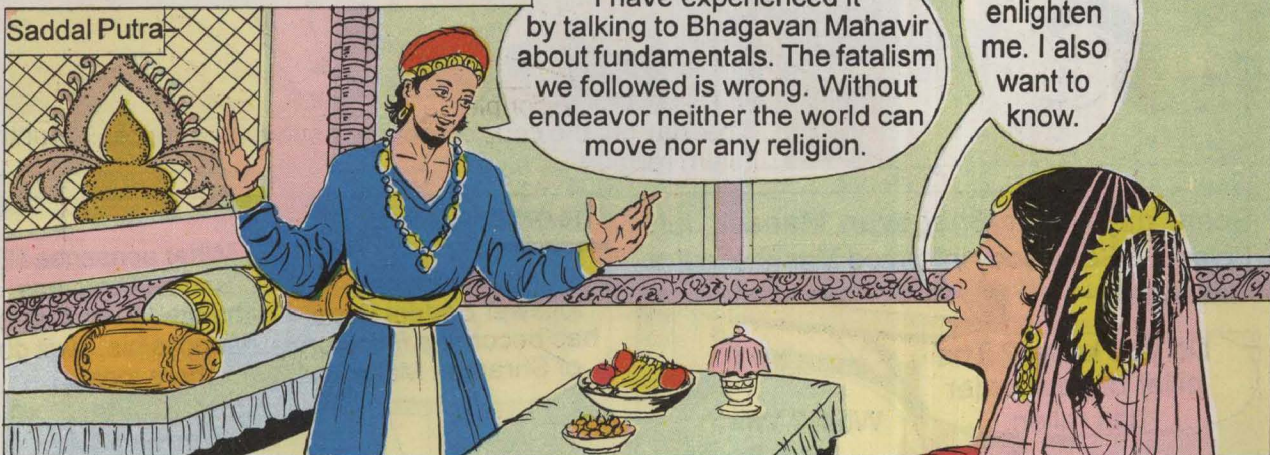
How, my lord ?



Saddal Putra—

I have experienced it by talking to Bhagavan Mahavir about fundamentals. The fatalism we followed is wrong. Without endeavor neither the world can move nor any religion.

My lord, please enlighten me. I also want to know.



Saddal Putra conveyed the gist of his discussion about fundamentals with Bhagavan Mahavir to Agnimitra. She also said—

It is true, my lord, that we were on the wrong path.

Would you also like to accept this religion ?

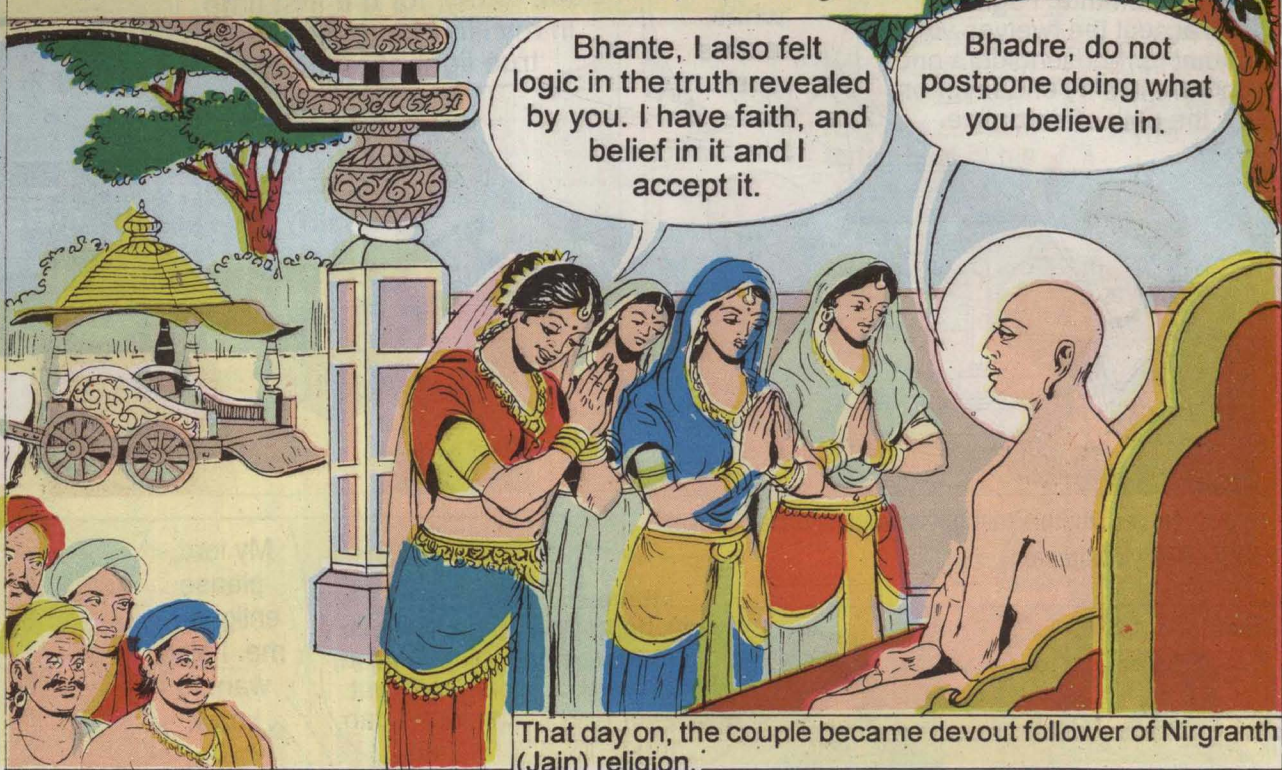


Agnimitra

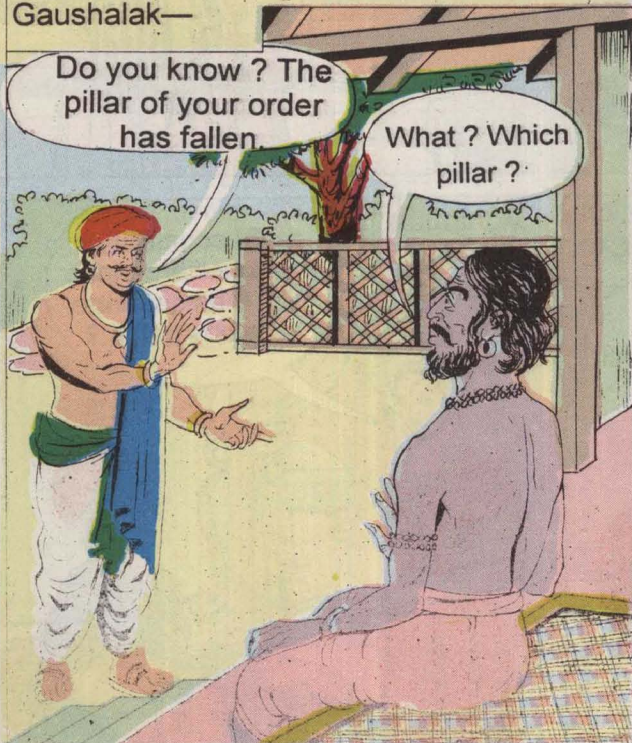
Of course! I am your life-partner. Why than separate religious paths ?



Next day Saddal Putra and his wife Agnimitra went to pay homage to Bhagavan Mahavir. Along with many women of her family, Agnimitra paid homage.



Some days later Bhagavan Mahavir left Polaspur. Somebody informed Mankhaliputra Gaushalak—



The messenger—



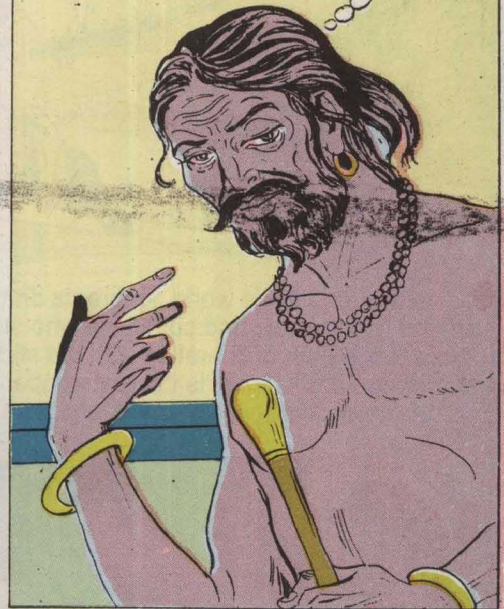
He went to the house of Saddal Putra who did not get up to greet; he did not even raise his eyes. Gaushalak's hopes were shattered.



He saw me but did not get up to greet me. He does not even look at me.

He thought—

In order to win him back I will have to do what he likes.



Gaushalak came near Saddal Putra and said—

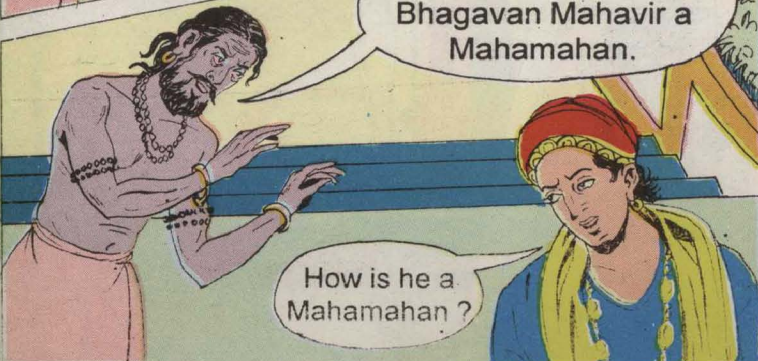
Beloved of gods, Did Mahamahan come here?

Who Mahamahan?

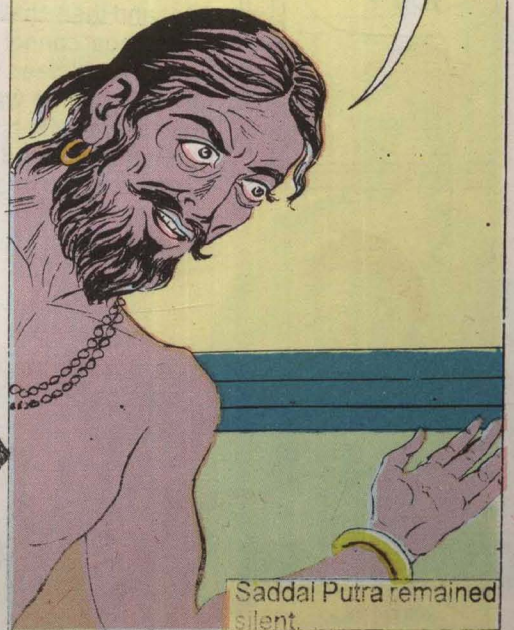


I call Shraman Bhagavan Mahavir a Mahamahan.

How is he a Mahamahan?



Because gods and humans all worship him. He is an omniscient.

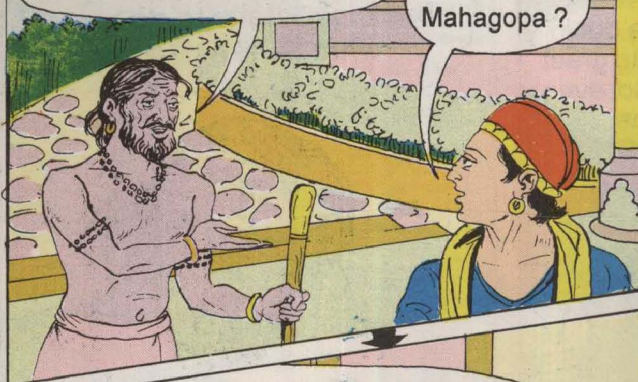


Saddal Putra remained silent.

Gaushalak asked again—

Did Mahagopa come here ?

Who Mahagopa ?



In this jungle like world, ignorants drift around like animals and suffer. He who steers them to the path of liberation with the stick of knowledge and religion is the Mahagopa. And Shraman Mahavir is a true Mahagopa.



Why can't you ?

Beloved of gods, if some wrestler holds fast the tail of a goat and then challenges it to a fight, the goat cannot fight and win because it has been caught by its tail. In the same way Mahavir restricts me with his logic and argument making it impossible for me to win in a debate.



Saddal Putra asked—

O beloved of gods, can you debate about religion with such a great scholar and preacher ?

No I am not capable of doing that.



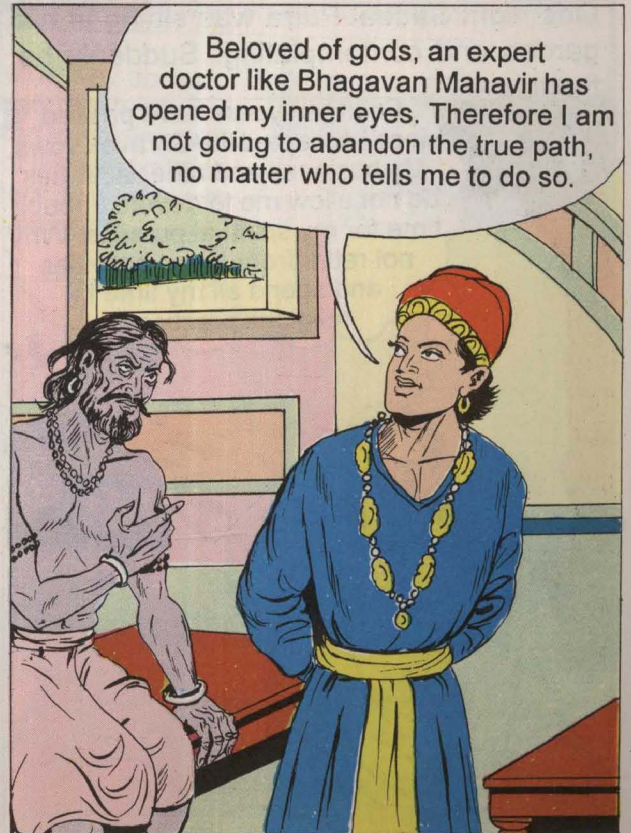
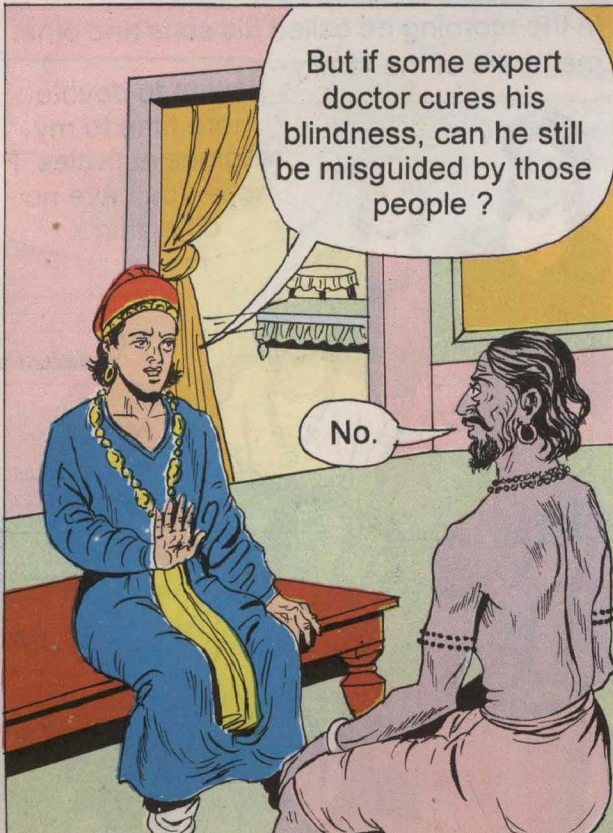
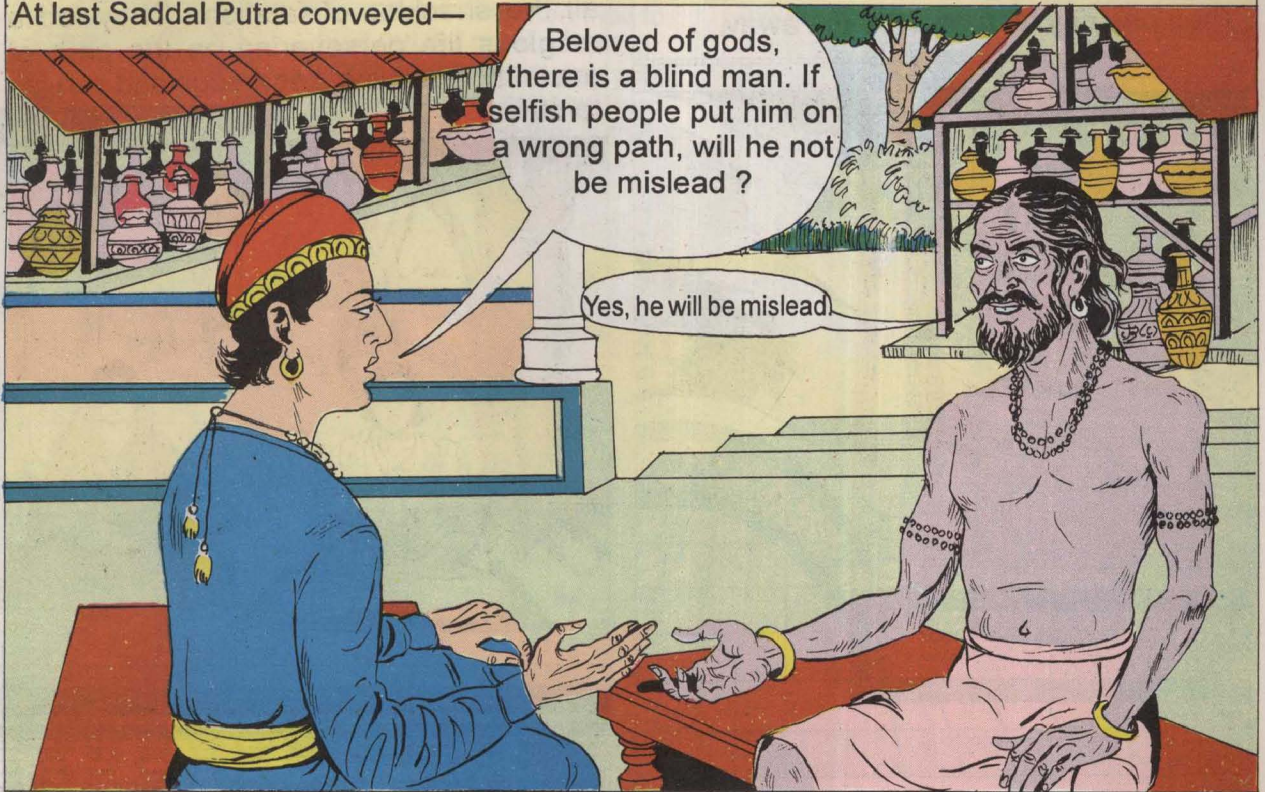
Saddal Putra got up and said—

Beloved of gods, you are praising the true virtues of my preceptor. therefore I invite you to stay in my shop.

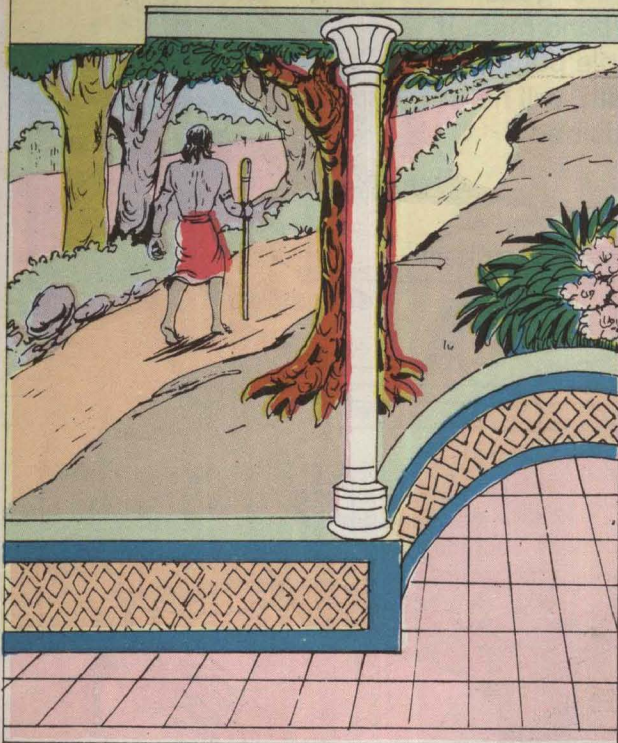


Good, my trick has worked. Now gradually the cart will come on the track.

Gaushalak stayed there and tried hard to reconvert Saddal Putra and Agnimitra but in vain. At last Saddal Putra conveyed—



Gaushalak lost all hopes when he heard this. Then one day he furtively went away.

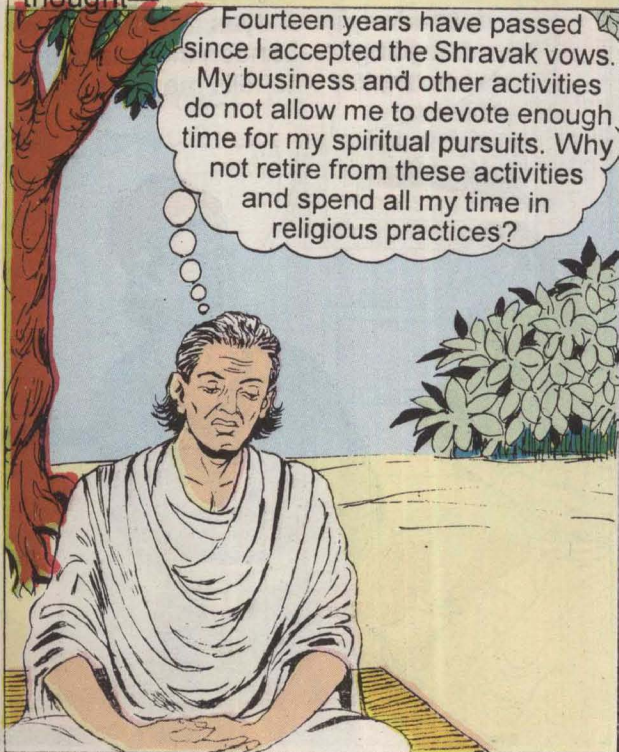


Saddal Putra and his wife Agnimitra broke all the shackles of fatalism. They led a religious life persevering on the path of austerity, discipline, knowledge and service to others.



One night Saddal Putra was sitting in his garden and contemplating. Suddenly he thought—

Fourteen years have passed since I accepted the Shravak vows. My business and other activities do not allow me to devote enough time for my spiritual pursuits. Why not retire from these activities and spend all my time in religious practices?

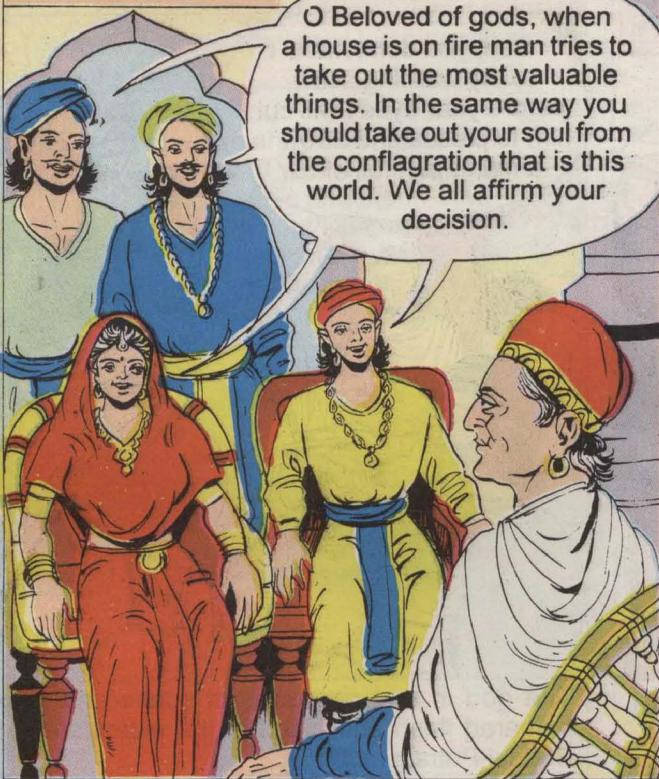


In the morning he called his sons and other members of the family—

I want to devote more time to my religious activities. I hope you have no objection !



The family members said—



O Beloved of gods, when a house is on fire man tries to take out the most valuable things. In the same way you should take out your soul from the conflagration that is this world. We all affirm your decision.

Getting the permission Saddal Pūtra came to Paushadhashala. He spread a hay-mattress, took the paushadh-vow and started his meditation after salutations to Bhagavan Mahavir.

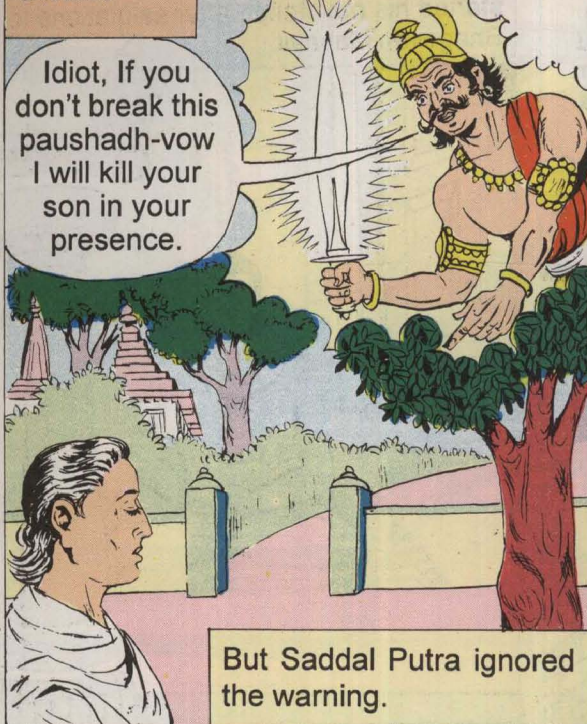


Around midnight a god appeared in the sky. He was huge and had a shining sword in his hand. He called in harsh tone—



Saddal Putra, why do you want an untimely death. You have taken vows and are sitting with a false desire of piety and religion. Abandon these codes or I will kill you today.

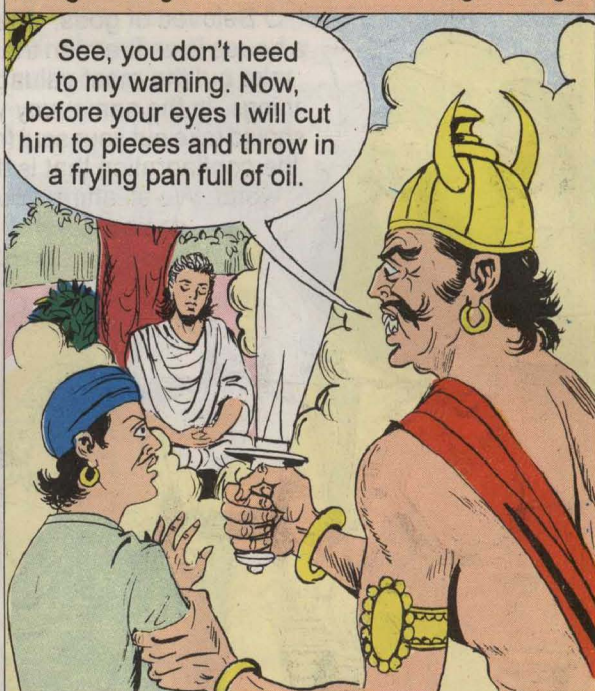
At this threat, Saddal Putra neither looked at the god nor was disturbed at all. Now the god shouted—



Idiot, If you don't break this paushadh-vow I will kill your son in your presence.

But Saddal Putra ignored the warning.

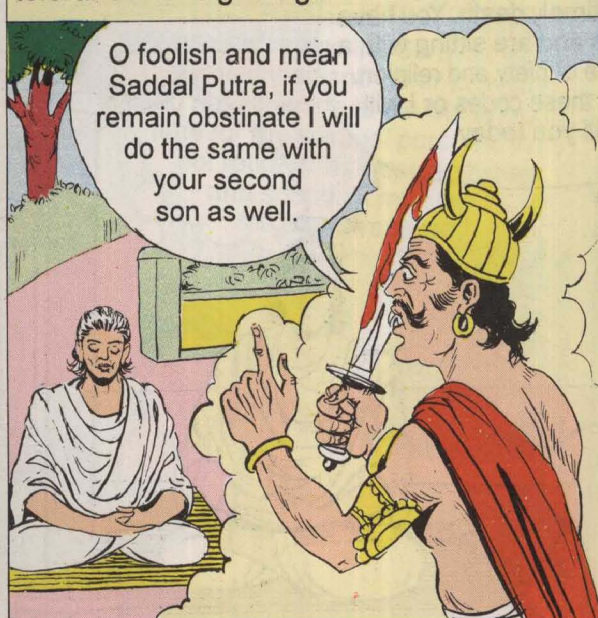
The god caught his elder son and brought along—



See, you don't heed to my warning. Now, before your eyes I will cut him to pieces and throw in a frying pan full of oil.

The god in fact created that scene and also smeared flesh and blood of the eldest son on Saddal Putra's body.

Even this horrendous scene failed to disturb Saddal Putra. He sat like an epitome of tolerance. The god again shouted—



O foolish and mean Saddal Putra, if you remain obstinate I will do the same with your second son as well.

The god did what he said but Saddal Putra continued his meditation.

Irritated and provoked, the god gave his third warning—



Saddal Putra, even now accept what I say, otherwise your third son will also face the same end.

Saddal Putra still remained tolerant and the god once again created the same scene.

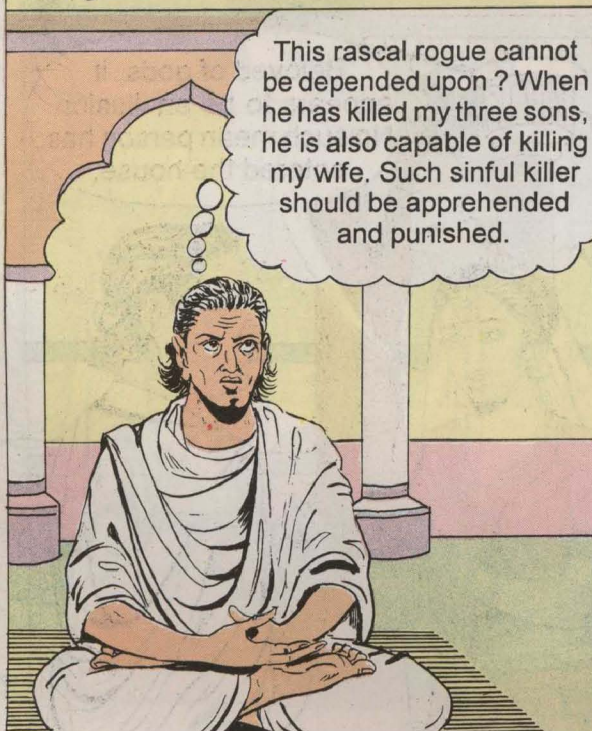
Seeing all his efforts go waste, the god resorted to his final trick. He displayed his gigantic size in the sky and said—

O mean and mulish person, come out of your obstinacy and abandon this paushadh-vow. Otherwise your life partner and religious wife will also meet the same fate. Before your eyes I will cut her to pieces.



This warning disturbed Saddal Putra. He thought—

This rascal rogue cannot be depended upon? When he has killed my three sons, he is also capable of killing my wife. Such sinful killer should be apprehended and punished.



With these thoughts Saddal Putra got up from the mattress and rushed to catch the god.

Catch him. Stop this rascal.

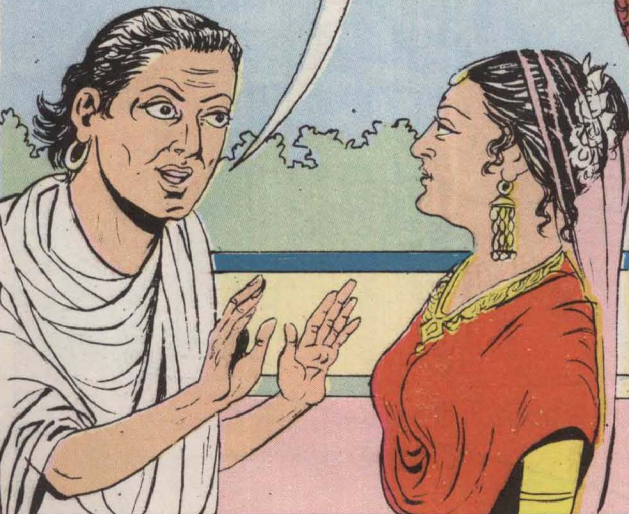


The god withdrew the illusion and flew away in the sky. Saddal Putra struck his head with a pillar. Agnimitra came running.



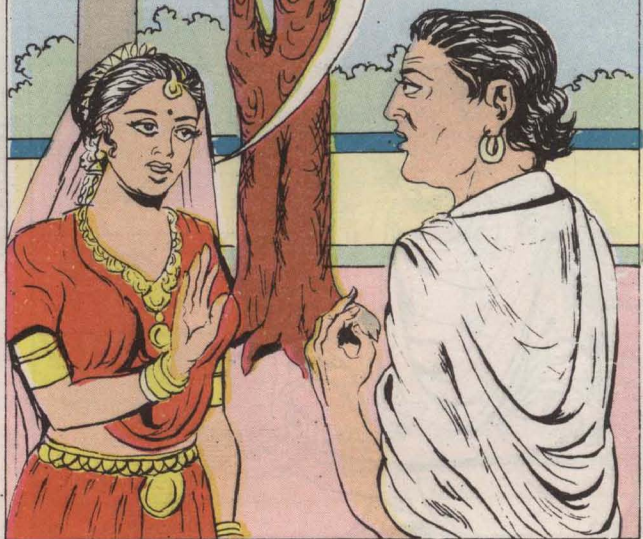
Saddal Putra said—

Some cruel and mean person asked me to abandon my religion and warned to kill my sons if I failed to do so. And he killed my three sons before me.



Agnimitra said—

Beloved of gods, it appears to be an illusion. No such mean person has entered the house.



Saddal Putra added—

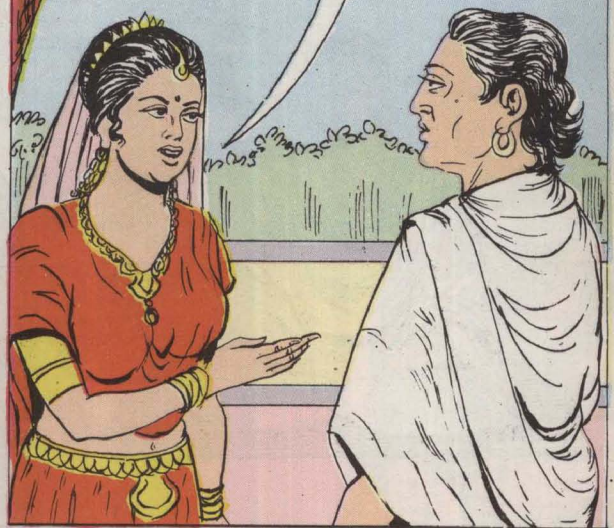
That rascal threatened to kill you. He just entered the house to catch you. I could not contain myself and shouted a warning to stop him. But he flew away.



Agnimitra was astonished to hear this.

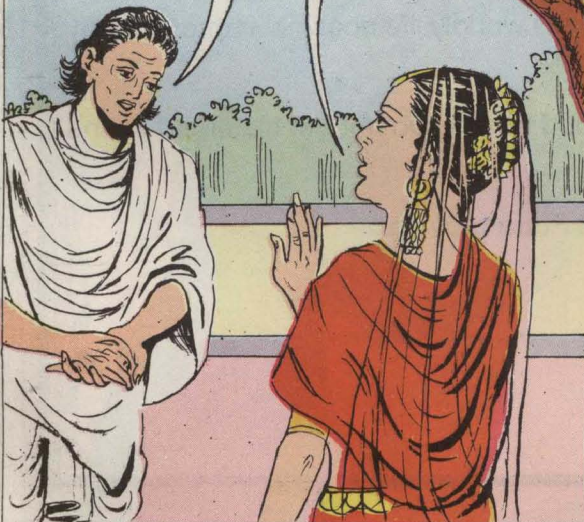
She pondered for sometime and said—

Beloved of gods, some mean person has created this affliction in order to distract you from the religious path. It was nothing but a demonic illusion.

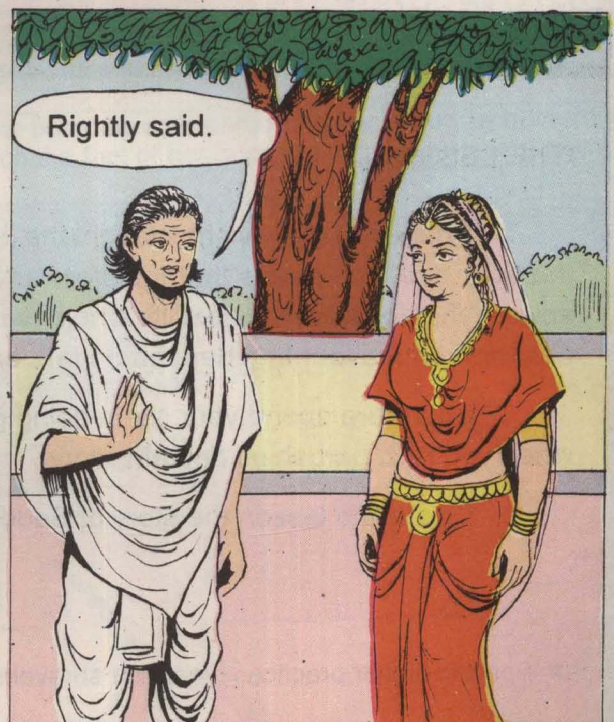


Oh! I have broken my paushadh-vow under this illusion.

Yes, Beloved of gods, that is true. Now you should atone for your vows by critical review Pratikraman and repenting.

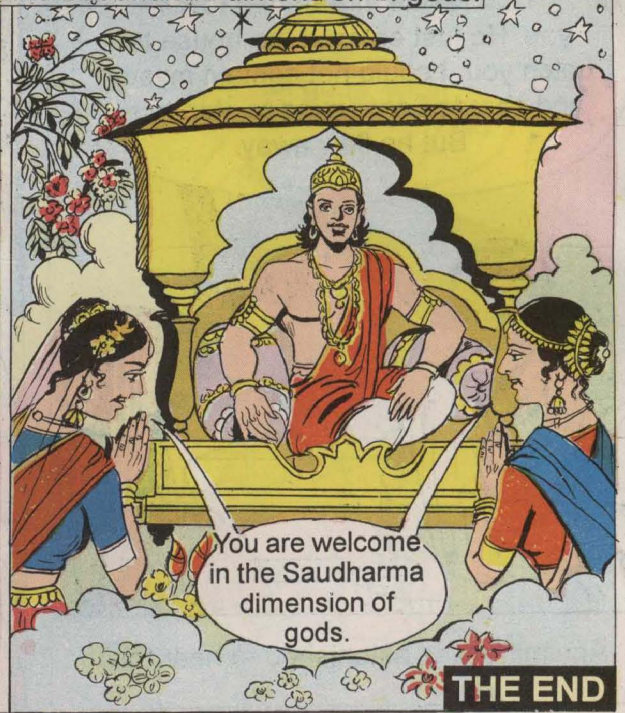
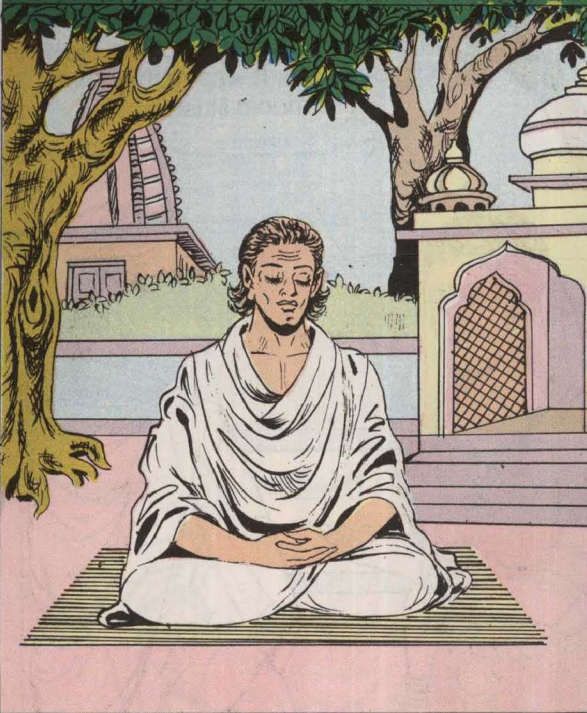


Rightly said.



And then he went through the prescribed process of atonement Pratikraman and accepted specific austerities.

After this he successfully observed the Shravak Pratimas[#] for many years. When his end came near he took an ultimate vow of one month duration to attain his goal. Abandoning his earthly body he reincarnated as a god in the Saudharma dimension of gods.



THE END

THE LESSON—

Bhagavan Mahavir has taught the lesson of endeavour to mankind—Man is the doer of all the deeds that manifest as happiness and misery. He reaps as he sows. What to say of the next life when even this worldly life does not improve if we abandon endeavour and depend on fate or luck.

Therefore spend your life in doing good deeds. Do not get disturbed even when you face hardships and afflictions.

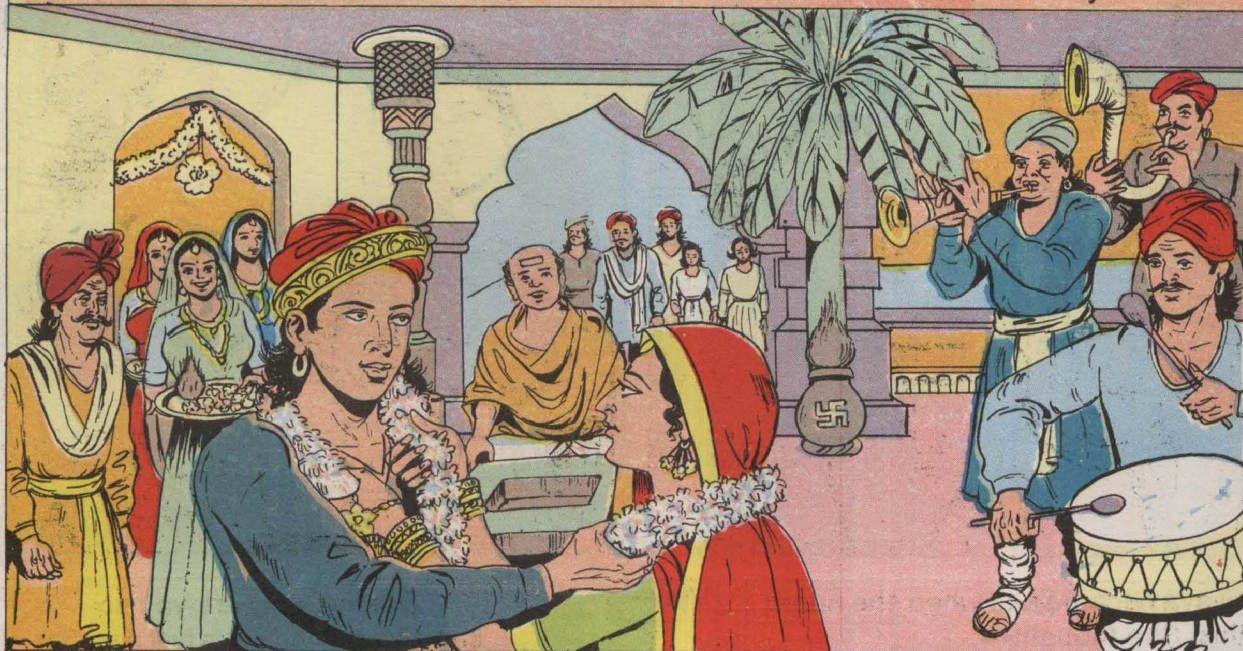
This is the lesson the story of Saddal Putra provides.

Specific higher practices meant for shravaks.



THE UNBROKEN PRACTICE OF CELIBACY

In the state of Kutch lived a rich merchant's son named Vijay Kumar. One day he was so impressed by listening about the glory of celibacy in a discourse by a learned ascetic that he took a vow of observing celibacy during the dark fortnight every month throughout his life. Some time later he got married to Vijaya, the beautiful daughter of another rich merchant in the same city.



On the first night after marriage, Vijaya entered the bedroom after enhancing her beauty by numerous embellishments. When she bowed down to touch the feet of her husband, Vijay took a step back.



Vijaya asked with surprise—

What is it, my lord ? Have I no right even to touch your feet ?

Darling, nothing like that. But today is the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight. It is just a matter of three days.



Vijaya was shocked—

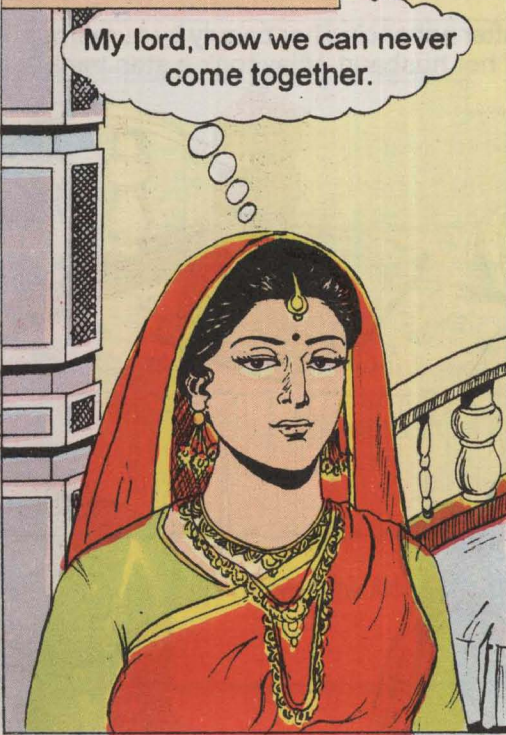
Why, what is the matter ?

Darling, I have taken a vow of observing complete celibacy during the dark fortnights. We can be together only after the moon-less night.



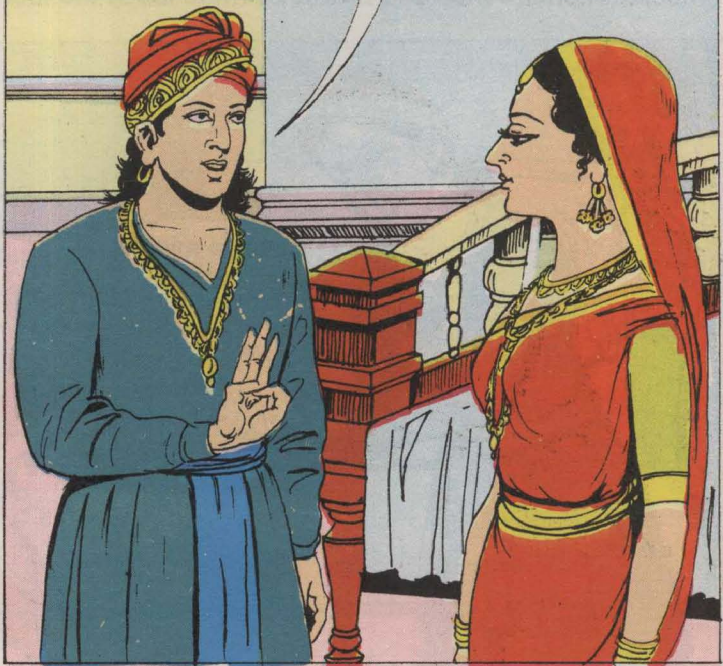
Vijaya became sad when she heard this. She thought—

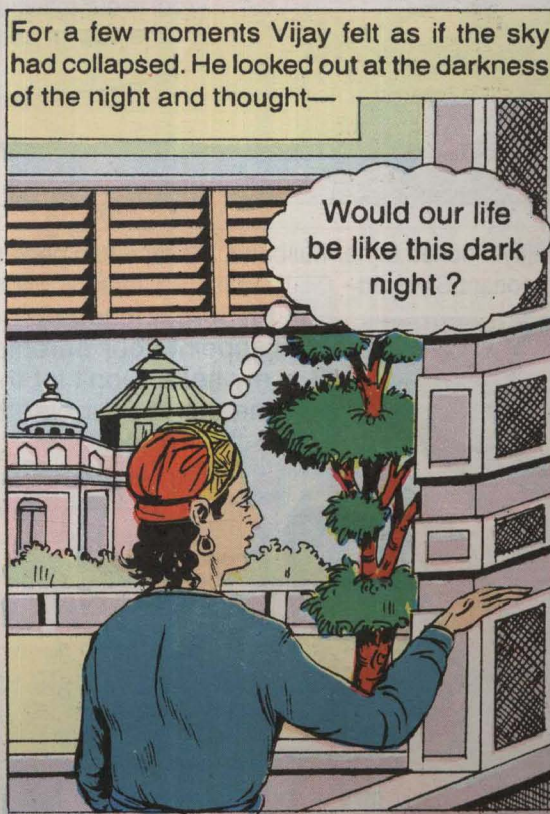
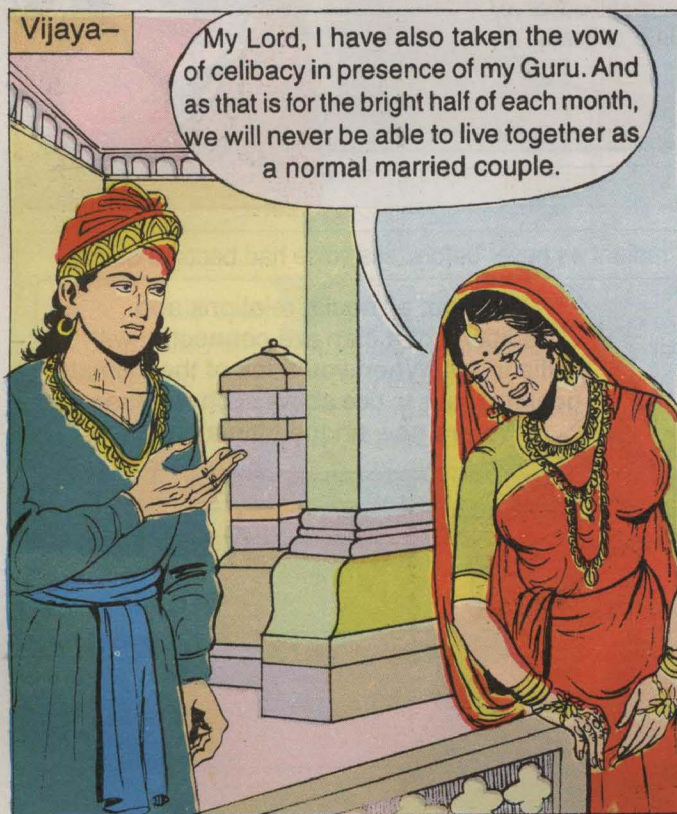
My lord, now we can never come together.



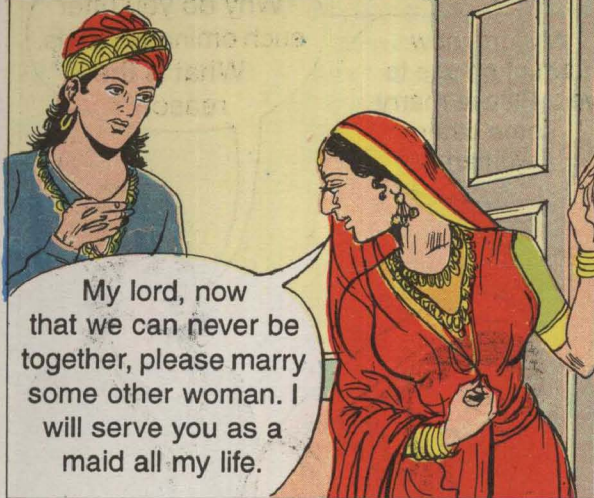
Vijay—

Darling, why are you so sad and worried ? It is just a matter of three days.



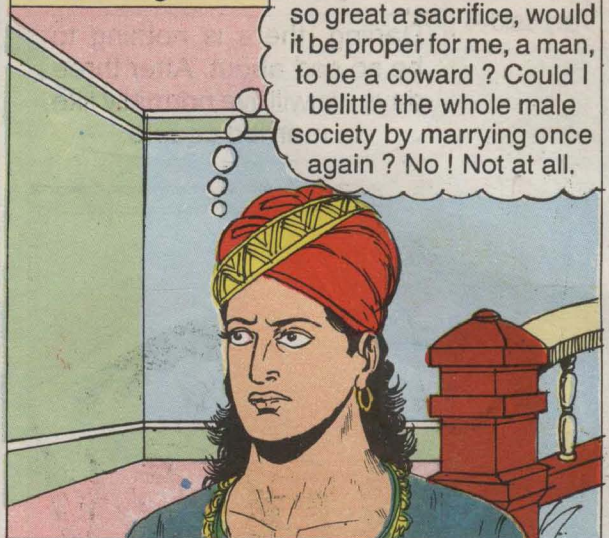


Then Vijaya proceeded to leave the room—



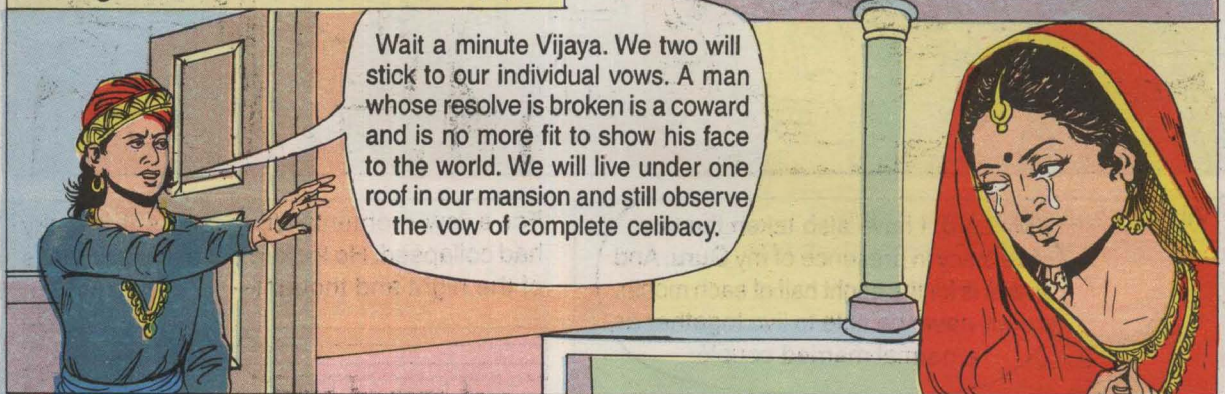
My lord, now that we can never be together, please marry some other woman. I will serve you as a maid all my life.

Vijay thought—



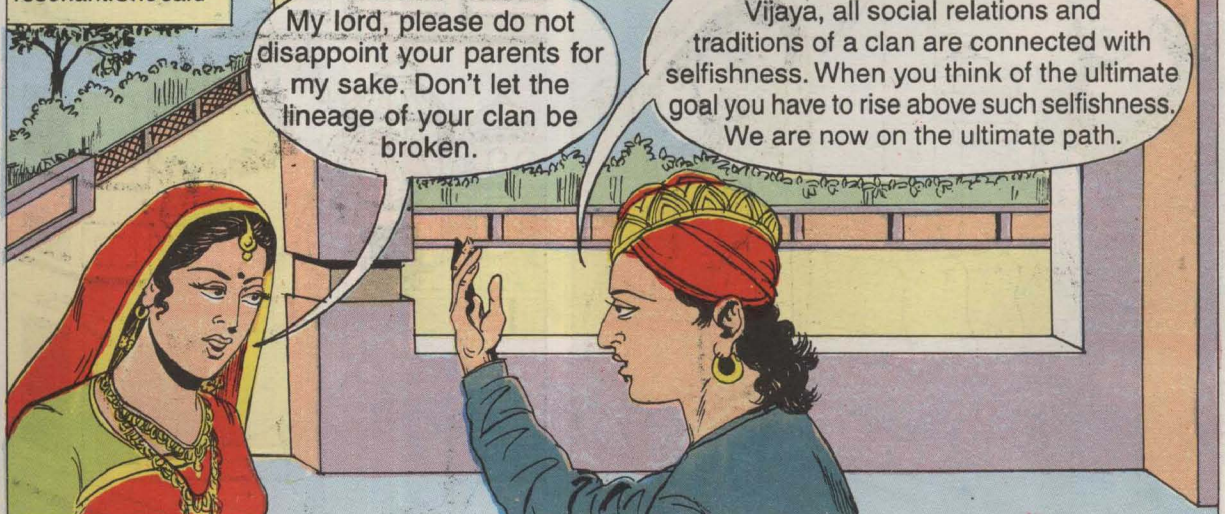
When a woman can make so great a sacrifice, would it be proper for me, a man, to be a coward? Could I belittle the whole male society by marrying once again? No! Not at all.

Making a silent resolve he called Vijaya—



Wait a minute Vijaya. We two will stick to our individual vows. A man whose resolve is broken is a coward and is no more fit to show his face to the world. We will live under one roof in our mansion and still observe the vow of complete celibacy.

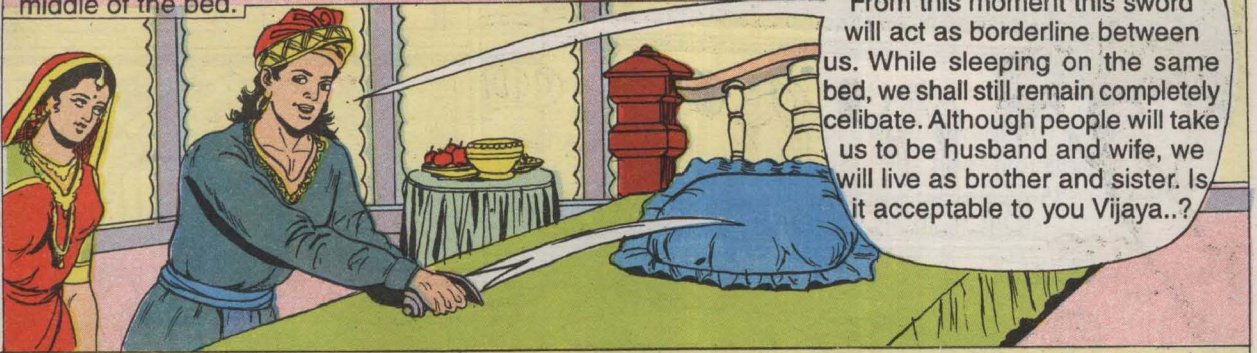
Vijaya looked at her husband. His face had become radiant as never before. His voice had become deeply resonant. She said—



My lord, please do not disappoint your parents for my sake. Don't let the lineage of your clan be broken.

Vijaya, all social relations and traditions of a clan are connected with selfishness. When you think of the ultimate goal you have to rise above such selfishness. We are now on the ultimate path.

Vijay then took his sword, hanging on a peg, and placed in the middle of the bed.



Filled with joy, Vijaya fell at his feet. Since that day the couple commenced their disciplined, austere, and religious life observing the vow of absolute celibacy.

During those days Jinadas, a shravak in Champa city, saw a dream that he is offering food for breakfast to a congregation of 84,000 ascetics. He thought when he got up—

What a happy dream.



Next day he went to the discourse of Vimal Kevali. After the discourse he asked the omniscient—

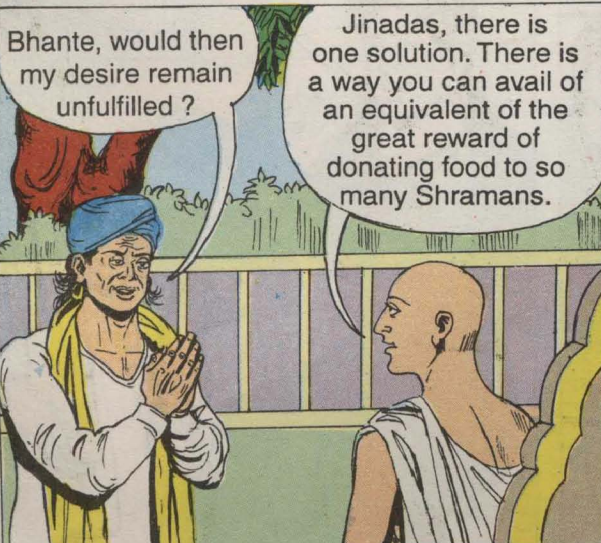
Bhante, I have an intense desire to offer food to a congregation of 84,000 Shramans. Is it possible to fulfill this desire?

Shravak, it is impossible to get such opportunity. Neither 84,000 ascetics will assemble at one place nor pure food in quantities to feed them would be available.



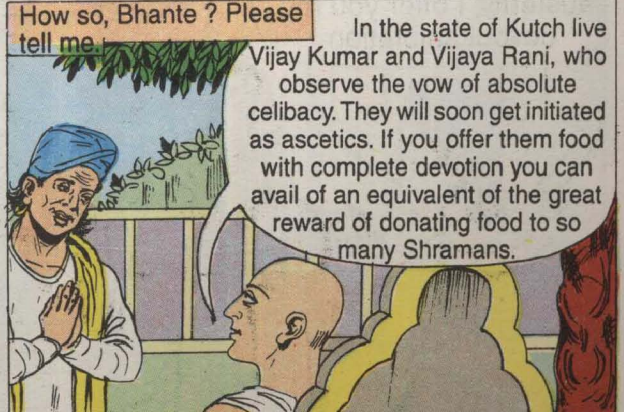
Bhante, would then my desire remain unfulfilled?

Jinadas, there is one solution. There is a way you can avail of an equivalent of the great reward of donating food to so many Shramans.



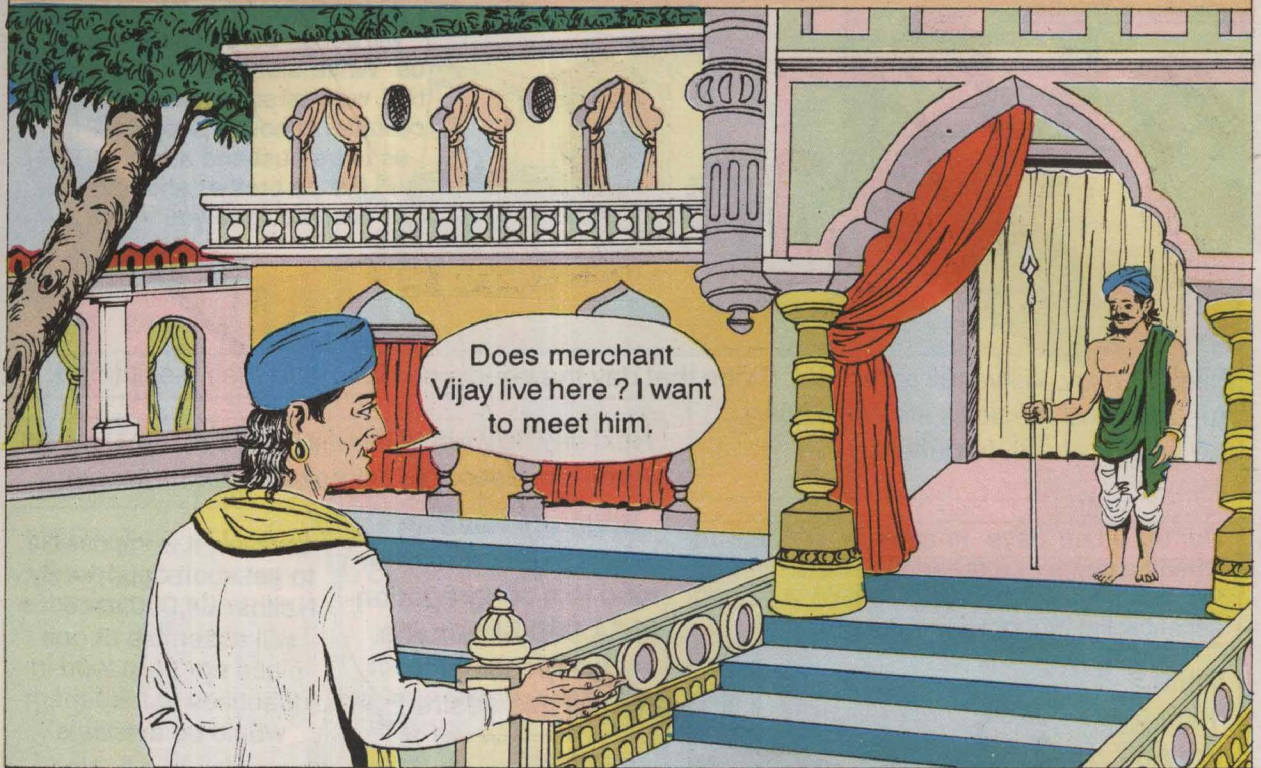
How so, Bhante? Please tell me.

In the state of Kutch live Vijay Kumar and Vijaya Rani, who observe the vow of absolute celibacy. They will soon get initiated as ascetics. If you offer them food with complete devotion you can avail of an equivalent of the great reward of donating food to so many Shramans.

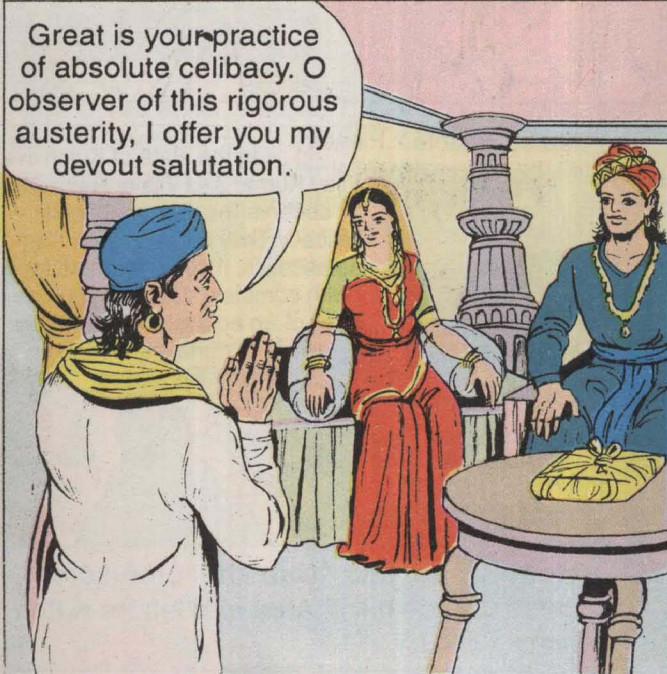


Hearing all this from the omniscient, Jinadas rode his chariot and left for Kutch state.

In Kutch he inquired about and arrived at the large mansion of merchant Vijay. He asked the guard—



The guard took him to merchant Vijay who was sitting in his room with Vijaya. Jinadas offered him greeting with reverence, introduced himself, and said—



Vijay was taken aback—

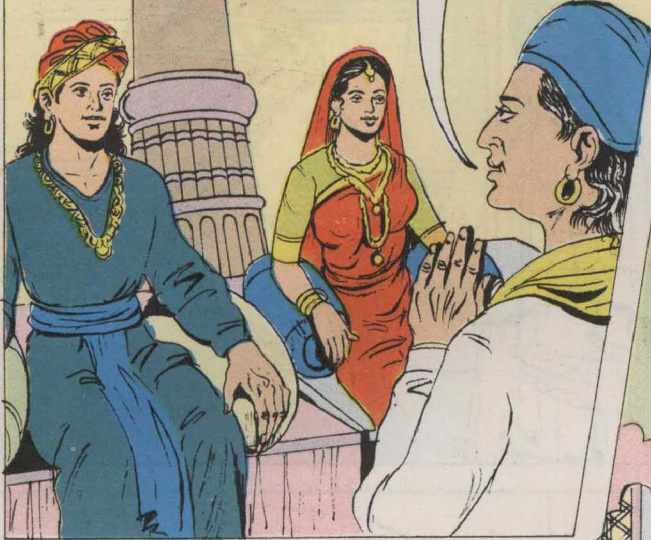


Jinadas told about his dream and added—

According to Vimal Kevali I can avail of an equivalent of the great reward of donating food to so many Shramans if I offer food to an absolutely celibate couple like you. That is why I have come so far.

Vijay and Vijaya accepted food offered by a co-religionist. Gods showered flowers from the sky—

Hail the observers of absolute celibacy. For ages your pious glory will inspire people to observe the vow of celibacy.

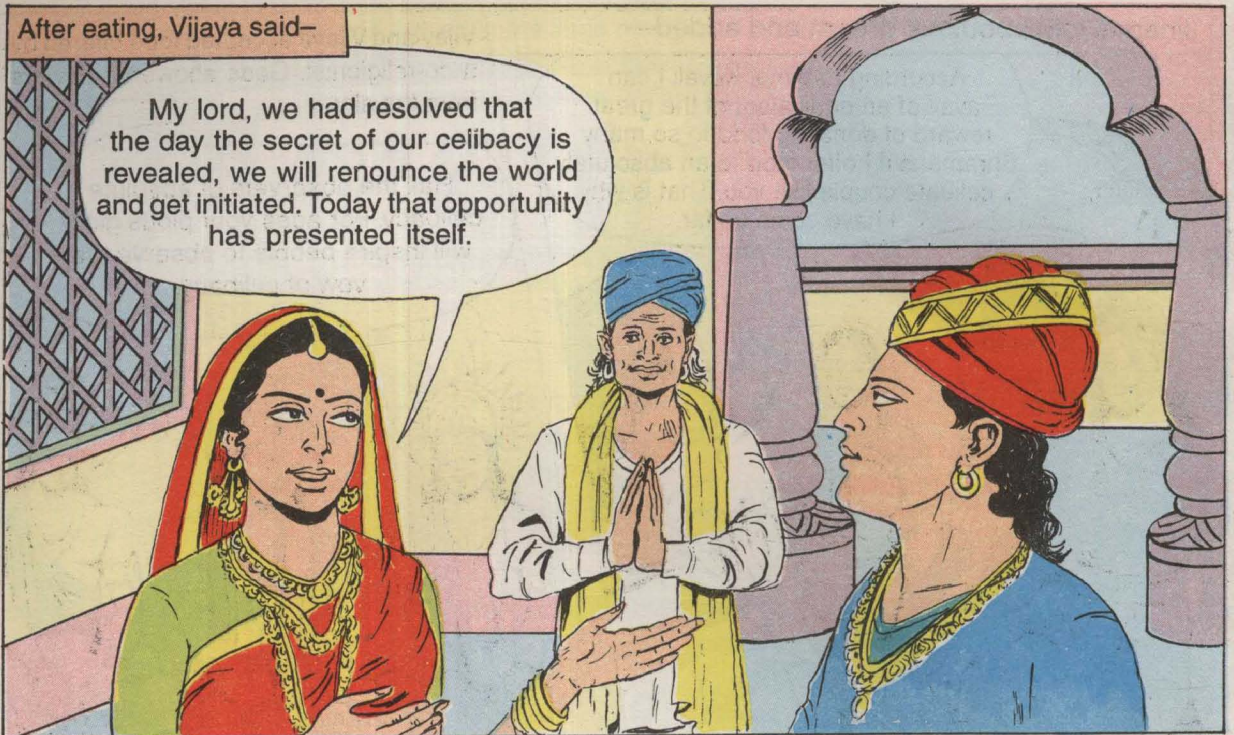


By accepting food offered by me you have made my life worthwhile.



After eating, Vijaya said—

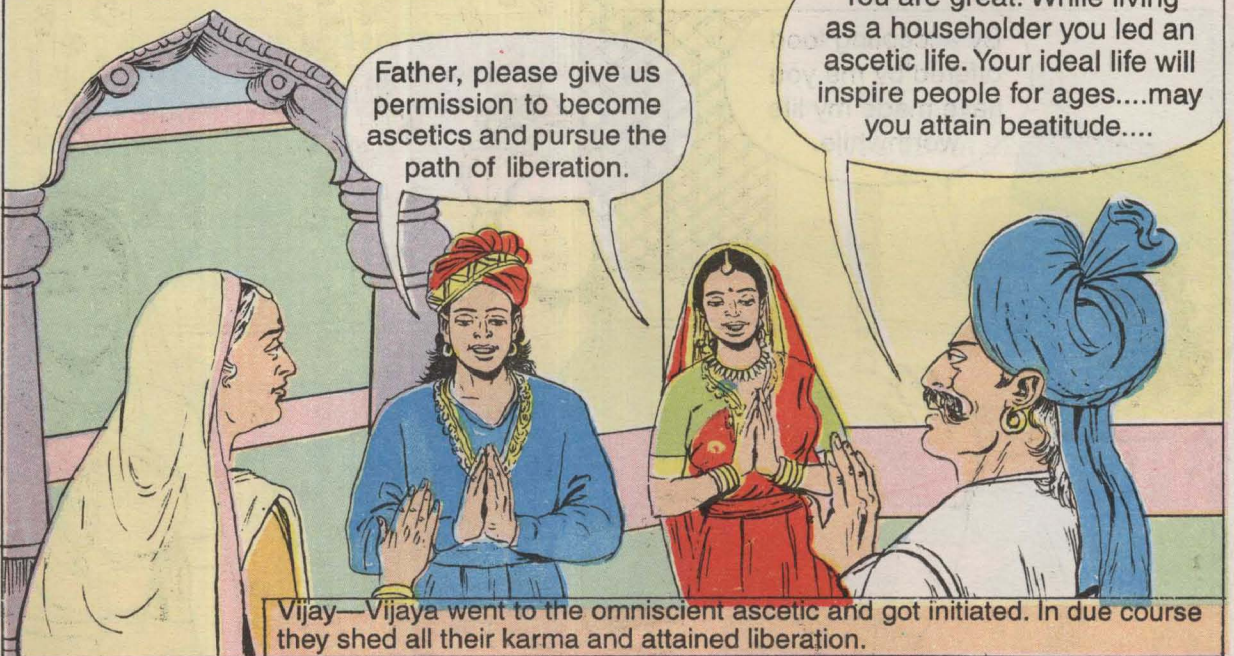
My lord, we had resolved that the day the secret of our celibacy is revealed, we will renounce the world and get initiated. Today that opportunity has presented itself.



The couple approached Vijay's parents—

Father, please give us permission to become ascetics and pursue the path of liberation.

You are great. While living as a householder you led an ascetic life. Your ideal life will inspire people for ages....may you attain beatitude....



Vijay—Vijaya went to the omniscient ascetic and got initiated. In due course they shed all their karma and attained liberation.

THE LESSON—

one who has a pure heart and great resolve can lead an unblemished life even as a householder just like a lotus in a pond. The story of merchant Vijay inspires us to lead a pious life.

THE END



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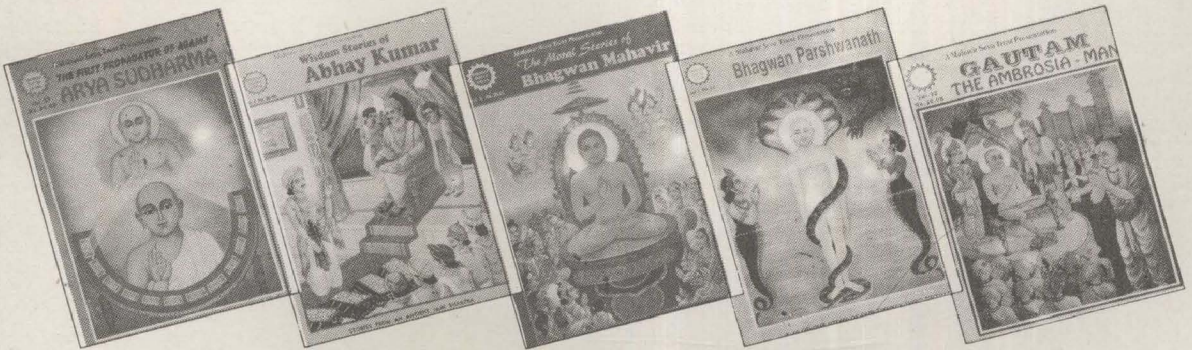
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Apathy of Gaja Sukumala

Gaja Sukumala said to his parents—this life is transitory like a drop on the tip of grass; and waves of water; so I want quickly to accept consecration, leaving this world. Hearing these words Vasudeva worried and mother Devaki swooned and fell down on floor. After coming to senses by fanning etc., shedding tears mother said—O Son ! To accept restraint is as difficult as to swim the ocean by arms and to walk on the edge of a sword you are too tender.....

Antakrd-Dasa Sutra. Sec. 3/Ch. 8

—Picture taken from ILLUSTRATED ANTAKR-DASA-SUTRA., Editor : Shri Amar Muni